



Nepal rescuers find 3 bodies

A Nepalese army chopper, that spotted the suspected wreckage of a U.S. Marine helicopter, lands at the airport in Kathmandu, Nepal, Friday, May 15, 2015.

Associated Press
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Blues legend King dead at 89

King, whose scorching guitar licks and heartfelt vocals made him the idol of generations of musicians and fans while earning him the nickname King of the Blues.

Associated Press
Page 30

Aruba TODAY

On Top Of The News Email:news@arubatoday.com website: www.arubatoday.com Tel:+297 582-7800 Saturday, May 16, 2015



Mystery in train crash: Was it hit by a flying object?

New rail lines are stacked up in an area near the site where a deadly train derailment occurred earlier in the week, Friday, May 15, 2015, in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

MICHAEL R. SISAK
MARYCLAIRE DALE
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — The Amtrak train that derailed along the busiest U.S. tracks may have been struck by an object in the moments before it crashed, investigators said Friday, raising new questions about the deadly accident.
National Transportation

Safety Board member Robert Sumwalt said an assistant conductor aboard the train told investigators that she heard Amtrak engineer Brandon Bostian talking over the radio with an engineer for a regional railroad just before the crash.

The regional engineer, who was in the same area as the Amtrak train, said his train had been hit by a rock

or some other projectile. The conductor heard Bostian say the same had happened to his Amtrak train, according to Sumwalt. The windshield of the Amtrak train was shattered in the accident but one area of glass had a breakage pattern that could be consistent with being hit by an object, he said, and the FBI is investigating.

Sumwalt declined to speculate about the exact significance of a projectile striking the train, but the idea raised the possibility that the engineer might have been distracted, panicked or even wounded in the moments before the train left the rails. The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority does not yet know

what caused the damage to its train that night, said Jerri Williams, a spokeswoman for the agency. SEPTA trains traveling through the area — including one of the poorest and most violent parts of Philadelphia — have had projectiles thrown at them in the past, whether by vandals or teenagers, she said.

Continued on page 2

Mystery

Continued from Front

It was unusual that the SEPTA train was forced to stop on Tuesday night. Not long before the derailment, two passengers on a southbound Amtrak told The Philadelphia Inquirer that something shattered a window on their train as it passed through the same area. They said Amtrak police boarded the train at 30th Street station in Phila-

delphia to document the damage. Amtrak has not commented on the report. NTSB spokesman Peter Knudson said the board was seeking more information about the other Amtrak train's window damage. The Amtrak wreck has made it clear that despite the train industry's widespread use of electronic signals, sensors and warning systems, safety still sometimes comes down to the knowledge and experience of the engineer at the controls.

Those skills would have been critical on the curve where the New York-bound train derailed, killing eight and injuring more than 200 in the deadliest U.S. train accident in nearly six years.

Instead of high-tech signals or automatic controls, engineers on that stretch of track have to rely on their familiarity with the route and a printed timetable they carry with them, not unlike engineers a century ago.

"We're depending heavily on the human engineer to correctly obey and interpret the signals that he sees and also speed limits and other operating requirements," said David B. Clarke, a railroad expert at the University of Tennessee. The engineer, who had been working that route for several weeks, told investigators that he does not recall anything after ringing the train's bell as he passed by the North Philadelphia station a couple of minutes before Tuesday night's crash.

The engineer told the NTSB in an interview Friday that he felt comfortable with the train and was not fatigued, Sumwalt said.

In the minute before the derailment, the Amtrak train accelerated from 70 mph to more than 100 mph, even though the curve where it came off the tracks has a maximum speed of 50 mph.

It's not clear whether Bostian manually accelerated, Sumwalt said, though a data recorder shows that he did engage a braking system seconds before the derailment.

Experts say the railroad's signaling system would have slowed the train automatically if it had hit the maximum speed allowed



Emergency personnel gather near the scene of a deadly train derailment, Wednesday, May 13, 2015, in Philadelphia. The Amtrak train, headed to New York City, derailed and crashed in Philadelphia on Tuesday night, killing at least six people and injuring dozens of others.

Associated Press

on the line, but older cab-signal and train-control systems do not respond to localized speed restrictions. Investigators are also conducting drug tests. Bostian's lawyer has said he was not using drugs or alcohol. James Weir, a friend of Bostian's since they were teenagers in the Memphis area, said he called the engineer after hearing about the wreck, but that his friend was hospitalized and could not say much.

As a teenager, Bostian was a safe driver who would not go even 5 mph over the speed limit, he said.

"Whenever I would drive, I'd tend to go a little over and he'd fuss at me. He'd tell me to slow down. He's just not the kind of guy that breaks the rules," Weir said. "He puts safety ahead of everything."

Preliminary checks have not found any pre-existing problems with the train, the rail line or the signals.

Because of his experience, Bostian should have known the route, even if there's

not so much as a speed limit sign on the side of the tracks, said Howard Spier, a Miami-based lawyer who is a former president of the Academy of Rail Labor Attorneys.

"It's engrained in them. He knew it," Spier said. "I'm convinced he knew he was entering a speed-restrictive curve."

The wreck has raised questions about positive train control, a system that automatically brakes trains going too fast. It is installed on the tracks where the train derailed, but it had not been turned on because further testing was needed, Amtrak President Joseph Boardman said.

Boardman said this week that he intends to have the system running across Amtrak by the end of this year, as Congress mandated back in 2008.

The system is already operating in other parts of the Northeast Corridor, the busy stretch of tracks between Boston and Washington. □

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U.S. jury orders death for the Boston Marathon bomber

DENISE LAVOIE

AP Legal Affairs Writer

BOSTON (AP) — A jury sentenced Dzhokhar Tsarnaev to death Friday for the Boston Marathon bombing, sweeping aside pleas that he was just a “kid” who fell under the influence of his fanatical older brother.

In America's most closely watched terrorism trial in decades, the 21-year-old Tsarnaev was sentenced to death Friday by a federal jury that swept aside arguments he was just a “kid” who fell under the influence of his fanatical older brother.

The decision — which came just over two years after the April 15, 2013, bombing that killed three people and wounded more than 260 — brought relief and grim satisfaction to many in Boston.

“We can breathe again,” said Karen Brassard, who suffered shrapnel wounds on her legs.

The death sentence sets the stage for what could be America's first execution of a terrorist in the post-Sept. 11, 2001 era, though the case is likely to go through years of appeals.

In the meantime, Tsarnaev will probably be sent to death row at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, where Oklahoma bomber Timothy McVeigh was put to death in 2001.

A somber-looking Tsarnaev stood with his hands folded, his head slightly bowed, as he learned his fate, sealed after 14 hours of deliberations over three days. His lawyers left court without comment.

His father, Anzor Tsarnaev, reached by phone in the Russian region of Dagestan, let out a deep moan upon hearing the news and hung up.

The Tsarnaevs — ethnic

Chechens — lived in the former Soviet republic of Kyrgyzstan and the volatile Dagestan region, near Chechnya, before moving to the U.S. about a decade before the bombings. They settled in Cambridge, just outside Boston.

The 12-member federal jury had to be unanimous for Tsarnaev to get the death penalty. Otherwise, the former college student would have automatically received life in prison with no chance of parole.

In weighing the arguments for and against death, the jurors decided among other things that Tsarnaev showed a lack of remorse. And they emphatically rejected the defense's central argument — that he was led down the path to terrorism by his big brother.

“Today the jury has spoken. Dzhokhar Tsarnaev will pay for his crimes with his life,” said U.S. Attorney Carmen Ortiz.

The attack and the ensuing manhunt paralyzed the city for days and cast a pall over the marathon — normally one of Boston's proudest, most exciting moments — that has yet to be lifted. With Friday's decision, community leaders and others talked of closure, of resilience, of the city's Boston Strong spirit.

“Today, more than ever, we know that Boston is a city of hope, strength and resilience that can overcome any challenge,” said Mayor Marty Walsh.

Tsarnaev was convicted last month of all 30 charges against him, including use of a weapon of mass destruction, for joining his now-dead brother, Tamerlan, in setting off two shrapnel-packed pressure-cooker bombs near the finish line of the race. Tsarnaev was also found guilty in the killing of



In this courtroom sketch, Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, center, stands with his defense attorneys as a death by lethal injection sentence is read at the Moakley Federal court house in the penalty phase of his trial in Boston, Friday, May 15, 2015.

Associated Press

an MIT police officer during the getaway.

Seventeen of the charges carried the possibility of a death sentence; ultimately, the jury gave him the death penalty on six of those counts.

Tsarnaev's chief lawyer, death penalty specialist Judy Clarke, admitted at the very start of the trial that he participated in the bombings.

But Clarke argued that Dzhokhar was an impressionable 19-year-old led astray by his domineering 26-year-old brother, Tamerlan. The defense portrayed Tamerlan as the mastermind of the plot to punish the U.S. for its wars in Muslim countries.

Tamerlan died days after the bombing when he was shot by police and run over by Dzhokhar during a chaotic getaway attempt.

Prosecutors depicted Dzhokhar as an equal part-

ner in the attack, saying he was so coldhearted he planted a bomb on the pavement behind a group of children, killing an 8-year-old boy.

To drive home their point, prosecutors cited the message he scrawled in the dry-docked boat where he was captured: “Stop killing our innocent people and we will stop.” And they opened their case in the penalty phase with a startling photo of him giving the finger to a security camera in his jail cell months after his arrest.

“This is Dzhokhar Tsarnaev — unconcerned, unrepentant and unchanged,” prosecutor Nadine Pellegri said.

The jurors also heard grisly and heartbreaking testimony from numerous bombing survivors who described seeing their legs blown off or watching someone next to them die.

Killed in the bombing were Lingzi Lu, a 23-year-old Boston University graduate student from China; Krystle Campbell, a 29-year-old restaurant manager; and 8-year-old Martin Richard, who had gone to watch the marathon with his family. Massachusetts Institute of Technology police Officer Sean Collier was gunned down in his cruiser days later. Seventeen people lost legs in the bombings. The speed with which the jury reached a decision surprised some, given that the jurors had to fill out a detailed worksheet in which they tallied up the factors for and against the death penalty.

The jury agreed with the prosecution on 11 of the 12 aggravating factors cited, including the cruelty of the crime, the extent of the carnage, the killing of a child, and Tsarnaev's lack of remorse. □

Clintons report making \$25M for speeches since Jan. '14

**KEN THOMAS
STEPHEN BRAUN
Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hillary Rodham Clinton and former President Bill Clinton reported Friday they earned more than \$25 million combined in speaking fees since January 2014. Clinton's presidential campaign reported the income in a personal financial disclosure report filed with the Federal Election Commission. The report, required of every candidate for the White House, also shows Hillary Clinton earned more than \$5 million from her 2014 memoirs, "Hard Choices."

The details of the report were described by a Clinton campaign official who spoke on condition of anonymity in order to discuss a report not yet publicly available from the FEC. The report was expected to be released publicly later Friday.

While Clinton has begun her second campaign for president by casting herself as a champion for middle-class voters, she's long



In this May 5, 2015, file photo, Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton speaks at an event at Rancho High School, Tuesday, May 5, 2015, in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

draw criticism from Republicans about the wealth she and Bill Clinton have amassed since he left the White House. That includes their ability to command six-figure fees for delivering speeches. The finances behind the family's charitable foundation have also gen-

erated scrutiny because of its acceptances of donations from foreign governments.

During last year's book tour, Clinton told an interviewer that her family was "dead broke" when they left the White House, which Republicans said showed

a lack of understanding of the needs of typical families.

Liberals have also questioned whether Clinton is too closely tied to Wall Street, pointing to her days representing New York in the U.S. Senate. They are also wary she might not aggressively seek to regulate the nation's financial industry and serve as an adequate bulwark against economic inequality.

The campaign official said the FEC filing will show that the couple earned more than \$25 million for more than 100 paid speeches between January 2014 and May 2015. That is an average fee of about \$250,000 per speech.

In an interview with NBC News earlier this month, Bill Clinton defended the speaking fees. "I gotta pay our bills," he said. "And I also give a lot of it to the foundation every year."

The report will also list assets of between \$5 million and \$25 million in a mutual fund managed by Vanguard that the Clintons set up in the past year. The couple did not earn any capital gains during the period and paid an effective tax rate of more than 30 percent in the 2014 tax year, the official said.

Clinton last filed a financial disclosure report during

her final year as Secretary of State in 2012, when she reported that her and her husband's wealth was estimated between \$4 million and \$20 million.

Much of that income came from the lucrative speeches and appearances made by Bill Clinton around the world. A recent Associated Press review of the Clintons' disclosures and State Department records found that Bill Clinton had been paid at least \$50 million for his appearances between 2009 and 2012, the four years that Hillary Clinton served as the nation's top diplomat.

Federal candidates are required to file personal financial disclosures within 30 days of announcing their candidacy or on May 15. Several Republican candidates in the race filed a request for an extension to those deadlines. Each disclosure form lists candidates' assets and liabilities, and provides a snapshot of their annual income. But federal rules allow those figures to be reported in wide ranges instead of specific amounts — allowing candidates, for example, to report a large asset as worth between \$1 million and \$5 million.

Any income exceeding \$200 has to be reported and most assets worth more than \$1,000 at the end of a calendar year must be disclosed.

Assets can include bank accounts, real estate, insurance plans, stock and securities holdings. Liabilities can include loans, mortgages and other debts.

Annual income includes not only salaries, but also stock, securities and real estate profits, interest, book profits and speeches and other honoraria. □

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Man who shot at George Zimmerman charged

LAKE MARY, Fla. (AP) — A man who shot at George Zimmerman during a confrontation earlier this week along a busy central Florida road has been arrested. Matthew Apperson was charged on Friday with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, aggravated battery with a deadly weapon and firing a missile into an occupied conveyance, Lake Mary police reported in a news release. Apperson turned himself in at the police department Friday evening. Zimmerman's attorney, Don West, has said the former neighborhood watch

volunteer had recently moved to another state but came back to the Orlando suburb of Lake Mary for Mother's Day. He was driving to a doctor's appointment Monday when Apperson intentionally fired his gun into Zimmerman's truck without provocation, detectives said. Police recovered two guns from Apperson and one from Zimmerman. Both men had their guns legally. The passenger window of Zimmerman's pickup had a bullet hole in it, and Zimmerman suffered minor injuries from flying glass and debris.

Apperson's attorney, Mark NeJame, said earlier this week that the shooting was "a good, old-fashioned self-defense case." He said their encounter on Monday was pure "happenstance." Zimmerman and Apperson were involved in a road-rage episode last September. Two days later, Apperson called police to report that Zimmerman's truck was parked near the disability-benefits office where he works. Zimmerman told police officers he had an appointment in the same office park, and no charges were filed. □



Matthew Apperson, who authorities say was involved in a shooting incident involving George Zimmerman, enters the Lake Mary Police Department with his attorney Monday, May 11, 2015, in Lake Mary, Fla.

Associated Press

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Asian groups file complaint over Harvard admission practices

JESSE J. HOLLAND

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — An alliance of Asian American groups on Friday filed a federal complaint against Harvard University, saying that school and other Ivy League institutions are using racial quotas to admit students other than high-scoring Asians.

More than 60 Chinese, Indian, Korean and Pakistani groups came together for the complaint, which was filed with the civil rights offices at the Justice and Education departments. They

are calling for an investigation and say these schools should stop using racial quotas or racial balancing in admission.

"We are seeking equal treatment regardless of race," said Chunyan Li, a professor and civil rights activist, who said they'd rather universities use income rather than race in affirmative action policies.

Harvard says its approach to admissions has been found to be "fully compliant with federal law." Officials also say the number of Asian students admitted in-



In this Aug. 30, 2012, file photo, people tour on the campus of Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass.

Associated Press

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creased from 17.6 percent to 21 percent over the last decade.

"We will vigorously defend the right of Harvard, and other universities, to continue to seek the educational benefits that come from a class that is diverse on multiple dimensions," said Robert Iuliano, Harvard's general counsel.

Iuliano pointed to the Supreme Court's landmark 1978 decision in Regents of University of California v. Bakke, which upheld affirmative action and specifically cited Harvard's admissions plan as a "legally sound approach" to admissions.

Harvard and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill were sued last year by "Students for Fair Admission," a nonprofit group based in Austin, Texas,

made up of recently rejected applicants who argue that affirmative action policies should be banned at colleges across the nation. The federal suits allege Harvard and UNC rely on race-based affirmative action policies that impact admissions of high-achieving white and Asian American students. The Harvard lawsuit also contends that the Ivy League university specifically limits the number of Asian Americans it admits each year.

Yukong Zhao, who organized the groups for Friday's complaint, challenged Harvard to open its admission books to prove that Asians were not purposefully being put at a disadvantage. "We want to help this country move forward," Zhao said. Other Asian American

groups and officials also released statements supporting affirmative action, including two members of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. "Neither of us believes that any racial or ethnic group should be subjected to quotas," Commissioners Michael Yaki and Karen Narasaki said. "Nor do we believe that test scores alone entitle anyone to admission at Harvard. Students are more than their test scores and grades." □



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Man who smuggled oil into U.S. in wine bottles gets probation



This undated photo provided by Department of Homeland Security/U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement shows Wolfgang Hans Langlois from his Hawaii driver's license.

Associated Press

JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER
Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — A German citizen who lives in Hawaii was sentenced Thursday to three years of probation for smuggling oil that's commonly used to make ecstasy. Wolfgang Hans Langlois put safrole oil in wine bottles hidden in household items he shipped from Germany to Kauai last year, according to documents filed in federal court in Honolulu. Customs agents intercepted the shipment and found the oil, which is legal but requires special permission to import. Langlois pleaded guilty to smuggling but maintains the oil was not for ecstasy but for a legal substance he wanted to make for his wife, who has cancer. He also got 720 hours of community service as part

of his sentence. The shipment caught the attention of agents because Langlois' name was on a watch list for people suspected of smuggling ecstasy to Hawaii from South America in vitamin and face cream jars in 2008, according to the court papers. Langlois was never charged in that case. In August 2014, when agents in Los Angeles intercepted the shipment from Germany, they discovered 10 wine bottles containing an "unknown yellow liquid stored inside of a wooden nightstand in a suspicious manner," according to an affidavit by a Homeland Security Investigations special agent. Tests revealed the liquid was safrole oil, used to manufacture MDMA, also known as ecstasy or molly. Defense attorney William

Harrison said Thursday his client is a chemist and was not trying to make ecstasy. Instead, Langlois wanted to use the oil to experiment with creating a legal, non-psychedelic, naturopathic medication to help his wife cope with breast cancer, Harrison said. "They're both very into organic practices ... they grow their own food," Harrison said. They built their house with scrap wood, he said. The oil was removed from the shipment and replaced with fake oil. Agents obtained a warrant to use a tracking device and then allowed the shipment to continue to Lihue, Kauai, the affidavit said. On Sept. 19, Langlois arrived at a pier to pick up the shipment, and agents followed him as he drove

home. "Agents conducting surveillance noticed that the defendant was taking actions that appeared to be counter-surveillance techniques, such as stopping on the side of the main road without any apparent reason and by making turns while increasing and decreasing his speed," the affidavit said. "Eventually, the defendant proceeded to his residence." During a search of Langlois' property, agents found what appeared to be a chemical laboratory, the affidavit said. The 7,500 milliliters of oil found could have produced 10,000 to 70,000 ecstasy pills, said Assistant U.S. Attorney Tony Roberts. He estimates the Hawaii street value of one pill to be \$10 to \$15.

In an attempt to convince the judge to sentence Langlois to some jail time, Roberts put a Drug Enforcement Administration special agent on the witness stand to discuss what was found during the search. There were various chemicals, flasks used in meth labs and a cookbook of sorts on making chemical substances — bookmarked at the MDMA pages, said Special Agent Frank Bru. Harrison said those chemicals could be used to make soaps and perfume. Langlois pleaded guilty in January. In his plea agreement, he admitted he flew from Hawaii to Germany, where he obtained the oil and intended to import it to the United States without telling customs officials. He apologized in court, saying he's learned a lesson. □

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Seattle, like it or not, becomes Shell's Arctic base



The oil drilling rig Polar Pioneer is towed toward a dock and in view of the Space Needle Thursday, May 14, 2015, in Elliott Bay in Seattle.

Associated Press

PHUONG LE

Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — An oil rig outfitted for Royal Dutch Shell's exploration in the remote Arctic Ocean parked in Seattle's harbor, marking a pivotal moment for an environmental movement increasingly mobilized around climate change. Activists paddling out in kayaks to meet the rig off Seattle's picturesque waterfront said Thursday it's their moment to stand against opening a new frontier of fossil fuel exploration.

"The environmental issues are big and this is an opportunity to present a David versus Goliath position, the people and the planet versus Shell, and create a national debate about drilling in the Arctic," said Paul Adler, 52, who hopped into a white kayak to the meet the Polar Pioneer on Thursday afternoon.

He and about two dozen kayakers paddled around Elliott Bay as the towering rig passed the city's Space Needle. The tiny boats, which kept their distance from the rig, were dwarfed by the 400-foot (120-meter)-long structure rising nearly 300 feet (90 meters) above the water. The image suggests how outmatched Shell's opponents have been as they try to keep the petroleum giant from continuing its \$6 billion effort to open new oil and gas reserves in one of the world's most dangerous maritime environments. Environmental groups in the Pacific Northwest are sensing a shift in the politics that surround energy production and have mobilized against a series of projects that would transform the region into a gateway for crude oil and coal exports to Asia.

"These proposals have woken a sleeping giant in the Northwest," said Eric de Place, policy director for Sightline Institute, a liberal Seattle think tank. "It has unleashed this very robust opposition movement." Shell still needs other permits from state and federal agencies, including one to actually drill offshore in the Arctic and another to dispose of wastewater. But it's moving ahead meanwhile, using the Port of Seattle to load drilling rigs and a fleet of support vessels with supplies and personnel before spending the brief Arctic summer in the Chukchi Sea, which stretches north from the Bering Strait between Alaska and Russia. Hurricane-force winds and 50-foot (15-meter) seas can quickly threaten even the sturdiest ships in the seas off Alaska. But Shell cleared a major bureaucratic hurdle Monday when the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, after taking public comments and reviewing voluminous reports, approved the multi-year exploration plan.

If exploratory drilling goes well, Shell plans to invest billions more in infrastructure

to open this new frontier, building pipelines under the ocean and onto the tundra of Alaska's North Slope, along with roads, air strips and other facilities.

Shell's last effort to do exploratory drilling in the Arctic Ocean also left from Seattle and ended badly. The Noble Discoverer and the Kulluk — a rig Shell had spent hundreds of millions of dollars to customize—were stranded by equipment failures in terrible weather, and the Coast Guard barely rescued the Kulluk's crew. Federal investigations resulted in guilty pleas and fines for rig owner Noble Drilling.

The Kulluk ended up on a scrap heap in China. Shell is leasing the Polar Pioneer in its stead, again backed by the Noble Discoverer. But Shell says it has gained vital experience and can safely drill on its leases in the Chukchi Sea, as well as the Beaufort Sea, an even more remote stretch north of the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge.

Shell spokesman Curtis Smith called Monday's approval an important milestone that "signals the confidence regulators have in our plan."

Officials in Alaska have welcomed the drilling, even flying to Seattle this week to lobby for Shell's plan. Labor groups representing port workers noted that Foss Maritime is employing more than 400 people already to service the Shell fleet. Washington Gov. Jay Inslee has proposed tough pollution limits on state industries and raised concerns about oil trains using the state's rails. Seattle Mayor Ed Murray, for his part, is strongly against hosting Shell's fleet, warning that the port could face daily fines because it lacks the proper permit.

Those fines would amount to no more than \$500 a day for the port — a tiny drop in a very large barrel if Shell, one of the world's largest companies, manages to recover billions of gallons of oil from the Arctic Ocean. □

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Mexico judge returns girl to custody of U.S. mom after 8 years

MARIA VERZA
PETER ORSI

Associated Press
MEXICO CITY (AP) — A Mexican judge returned a long-missing teenager to her U.S. mother Friday, ending the woman's eight-year search and a cross-border custody case in which another girl was mistakenly sent to Texas against her will.

Alondra Diaz, 13, and Houston resident Dorotea Garcia emerged from the courthouse together under heavy police guard following the afternoon ruling in Los Reyes, a town in the southwestern state of Michoacan. The previous day, DNA tests confirmed her identity.

Clad in jeans, a turquoise T-shirt and matching backpack, Alondra climbed into the backseat of a police van with her beaming mother and the two embraced. They did not comment publicly, but Judge Cinthia Elodia Mercado called the case closed.

"The recovery of a minor by an applicant mother has happened," Mercado said. "This is over."

Alondra Diaz was taken to Mexico in 2007 by her father, Reynaldo Diaz, without her mother's consent, and her whereabouts had not been known until recently. Garcia has indicated that she would drop legal complaints against the father if she got custody. The case gained international attention last month after Mercado erroneously ruled that 14-year-old Alondra Luna was the missing girl and ordered her turned over to Garcia.

Video recordings circu-

lated widely of Alondra Luna screaming and desperately resisting as police dragged her away. DNA testing performed after the girl was taken to the United States showed she was not Garcia's daughter, and she returned to her real family in Guanajuato.

With a media spotlight now on the case, Reynaldo Diaz delivered the real Alondra Diaz to family members who then presented her to authorities, saying she was prepared to go live with her mother.

Garcia had an emotional reunion with her daughter this week in a courtroom in Los Reyes.

In the case of the first girl, the judge denied requests by her and her family for DNA tests, saying it was not within her authority. This time Mercado waited for DNA confirmation.

The difference in treatment prompted Alondra Luna and her parents to travel to Los Reyes to stake out the courthouse Friday and demand an apology.

"We have been here since 9 a.m. and the judge does not want to see us, nor will she open the door, and she says that if we remain here she will call police to remove us," said Susana Nunez, the girl's mother. "We want to make it clear that my girl's rights were trampled."

Nunez said the family intended to file formal complaints next week but wanted to meet face-to-face with Mercado first to express their displeasure.

"I see this as a kidnapping that was ordered by the judge," the girl's father, Gustavo Luna, said. □



Alondra Diaz Garcia arrives for a court hearing in Los Reyes, Mexico, Tuesday, May 12, 2015. Associated Press

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IS group seizes government compound in Iraq's Ramadi

SAMEER N. YACCOUB
Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Islamic State militants seized the main government headquarters in Ramadi, raising their black flag over the compound and setting it ablaze hours after a series of suicide car bombings heralded the start of a major new offensive by the extremists on the strategic city. The advance marked a significant setback for the Iraqi government in its long fight to defend Ramadi, the capital of western Anbar

province, where Iraqi forces have made little progress against the extremist group despite months of U.S.-led airstrikes. The capture of the compound — which houses a police headquarters as well as provincial and municipal offices — followed a coordinated attack in which three near-simultaneous suicide car bombs killed at least 10 police officers and wounded dozens more, Ramadi's Mayor Dalaf al-Kubaisi said. He said two Humvees previously seized from the Iraqi



Security forces defend their headquarters against attacks by Islamic State extremists during sand storm in the eastern part of Ramadi, the capital of Anbar province, 115 kilometers (70 miles) west of Baghdad, Iraq, Thursday, May 14, 2015

Associated Press

bad day in Ramadi. We've said all along we see this as a long-term fight."

U.S. troops saw some of the heaviest fighting of the eight-year Iraq war in the sprawling desert province of Anbar, and Ramadi was a major insurgent stronghold. The IS group captured the nearby city of Fallujah and parts of Ramadi in January 2014, two years after U.S. forces withdrew and months before its main sweep across northern and western Iraq last summer.

A senior U.S. military officer downplayed the militants' latest gains in Ramadi, saying they were temporary and unlikely to withstand Iraqi counterattacks.

While conceding the extremists had executed a "complex attack" on the city, Marine Brig. Gen. Thomas D. Weidley said Iraqi security forces still controlled most of the key facilities, infrastructure and roadways in the Ramadi area.

Speaking by telephone from his headquarters in Kuwait, Weidley, the chief of staff for the U.S. command leading the campaign against the IS group, suggested the militants were trying to inflate the significance of what he called limited gains in Ramadi.

"Daesh does remain on the defensive," he said. "We've seen similar attacks in Ramadi over the last several months which the (Iraqi security forces) have been able to repel, and we see this one being similar to those." □

army were used in the attack.

Islamic State fighters also seized other parts of the city and attacked the Anbar Operation Command, the military headquarters for the province, al-Kubaisi said.

As they advanced, the militants carried out mass killings in which dozens of captured security forces and their families were slain, said Anbar provincial councilman Taha Abdul-Ghani.

The victims included some 30 tribal fighters allied with the Iraqi forces in the battle against IS, said another councilman, Athal al-Fahdawi. In the Jamiaa district of Ramadi, IS gunmen stormed the house of a policeman, Ahmed Mohammed, and shot him dead along with his wife, 12-year-old son and 4-year-old daughter.

Dozens of families were

forced to flee their homes in the area, al-Fahdawi said.

The head of Anbar's provincial council, Sabah Karhout, appealed to the central government in Baghdad to send reinforcements and urged the U.S.-led coalition to increase airstrikes against the militants in Ramadi.

"The city is undergoing vicious attack by Daesh and we are in dire need of any kind of assistance," Karhout said, using an Arabic acronym for the Islamic State group.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Jeff Rathke said the U.S. conducted "numerous airstrikes" in Ramadi on Friday as part of its support for Iraqi security forces fighting the Islamic State group.

"There will be good days and bad days in Iraq," Rathke told reporters. "ISIL is trying to make today a

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Nepal rescuers find 3 bodies near crashed U.S. Marine chopper

NIRMALA GEORGE

Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP)

— Nepalese rescuers on Friday found three bodies near the wreckage of a U.S. Marine helicopter that disappeared this week during a relief mission in the earthquake-hit Himalayan nation, and officials said it was unlikely there were any survivors from the crash.

"The wreckage of the helicopter was found in pieces, and there are no chances of any survivors," Nepal's defense secretary, Iswari Poudyal said. He did not give the nationalities of the three victims, only saying their remains were charred. The helicopter was carrying six Marines and two Nepalese army soldiers.

A separate team sent by the U.S. Marines said they identified the wreckage as the missing helicopter, the UH-1 "Huey."

Lt. Gen. John Wissler, commander of the Marine-led joint task force, told reporters in Kathmandu that his team could not immediately identify the cause of the crash or identify the bodies found.

"It was very severe crash, and based on what we saw in the condition of the aircraft, we believe there were no survivors," he said. He said extreme weather and difficult terrain hampered his team's efforts to work at the crash site.

"Due to the extremely difficult terrain of the site of the mishap, below-freezing temperatures and violent winds and thunderstorms, I made the decision to cease the recovery efforts for this evening," he said. "We cannot afford to put U.S. or Nepalese service members at any further risk." The recovery mission

will resume at first light Saturday. Speaking in Washington, President Barack Obama expressed condolences to the families of all the victims and said the Marines "represent a truth that guides our work around the world: When our friends are in need, America helps."

The wreckage was found about 24 kilometers (15 miles) from the town of Charikot, near where the aircraft went missing on Tuesday while delivering humanitarian aid to villages hit by two deadly earthquakes, according to the U.S. military joint task force in Okinawa, Japan.

The area is near Gothali village in the district of Dolakha, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) northeast of Nepal's capital, Kathmandu. The discovery of the wreckage, first spotted by Nepalese ground troops and two army helicopters Friday, followed days of intense search involving U.S. and Nepalese aircraft and even U.S. satellites.

The U.S. relief mission was deployed soon after a magnitude-7.8 quake hit April 25, killing more than 8,200 people. It was followed by another magnitude-7.3 quake on Tuesday that killed 117 people and injured 2,800.

The helicopter had been delivering rice and tarps in Charikot, the area worst hit by Tuesday's quake. It had dropped off supplies in one location and was en route to a second site when contact was lost.

U.S. military officials said earlier this week that an Indian helicopter in the air nearby had heard radio chatter from the Huey aircraft about a possible fuel problem. The father of the

31-year-old pilot, Capt. Chris Norgren, said Marine officials have notified the family that the wreckage was found but haven't confirmed the identities of any bodies. Ronald Norgren said Friday that "it doesn't look good."

A total of 300 U.S. military personnel have been supporting the aid mission in Nepal, which includes three Hueys, four Marine MV-22B Ospreys, two KC-130 Hercules and four Air Force C-17 Globemaster heavy-lift aircraft.

The Huey helicopter that crashed was from Marine Light Attack Helicopter squadron 469 based at Camp Pendleton, Cali-



Lt. Gen. John E. Wissler speaks during a press meet in Kathmandu, Nepal, Friday, May 15, 2015.

Associated Press

fornia. Also Friday, the 193-member U.N. General Assembly called for urgent assistance to help earthquake survivors and to rebuild the impoverished Hi-

malayan nation, urging the international community to support the U.N. appeal for \$415 million for essential needs over the next three months. □



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1,000 survivors of violence, hunger at sea land in SE Asia

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JOCELYN GECKER**
Associated Press

LANGSA, Indonesia (AP) — More than 1,000 people fleeing persecution in Myanmar and poverty in Bangladesh came ashore around Southeast Asia, describing killings, extortion and near-starvation after surviving a harrowing journey at sea.

An increasingly alarmed United Nations warned against "floating coffins" and urged regional leaders to put human lives first. The United States urged governments not to push back new boat arrivals.

The waves of weak, hungry and dehydrated migrants who arrived Friday were the latest to slip into countries that have made it clear they're not welcome. But thousands more are still believed stranded at sea in what has become a humanitarian crisis no one in the region is rushing to solve.

Most of the migrants were crammed onto three boats that Indonesian fishermen towed ashore, while a group of 106 people were found on a Thai island known for its world-class scuba diving and brought to the mainland.

"If I had known that the boat journey would be so horrendous, I would rather have just died in Myanmar," said Manu Abudul Salam, 19, a Rohingya from Myanmar's Rakhine state where three years of attacks against the long-persecuted Muslim minority have sparked the region's largest exodus of boat people since the Vietnam War.

Manu was aboard the largest boat to come ashore Friday, a wooden vessel crammed with nearly 800

people that was towed to the Indonesian village of Langsa in eastern Aceh province.

The vessel was at sea when authorities around the region began cracking down on human trafficking two

weeks ago. Aid groups and rights workers have warned that the crackdown prompted some captains and smugglers to abandon their ships and leave migrants to fend for themselves — a claim that was corroborated by survivors who came ashore Friday.

Manu said she watched the captain on her ship fleeing on a speed boat several days ago after apparently receiving a call on his cell phone. Before he left, he destroyed the boat's engine, she said, and the boat began to drift.



Newly arrived migrants receive medical treatment under a makeshift tent at Kuala Langsa Port in Langsa, Aceh province, Indonesia, Friday, May 15, 2015.

With food and water running out, tempers flared and fighting broke out, Manu said, sobbing, saying that her 20-year-old brother

was among dozens killed in violent clashes between the Bangladeshis and Rohingya on board.

"They thought the captain was from our country, so they attacked us with sticks and knives," she said, sobbing.

Southeast Asia for years tried to quietly ignore the plight of Myanmar's 1.3 million Rohingya but is now being confronted with a dilemma that in many ways it helped create. In the last three years, more than 120,000 Rohingya have boarded ships to flee to other countries, according to the U.N. refugee agency. No countries want them, fearing that accepting a few would result in an unstoppable flow of poor, uneducated migrants. But Southeast Asian governments at the same time respected the wishes of Myanmar at regional gatherings, avoiding discussions of state-sponsored discrimination against the Rohingya.

Myanmar, in its first official

comments as the crisis escalated in the past two weeks, indicated it won't take back migrants who claim to be Rohingya, who are denied citizenship in Myanmar and are effectively stateless.

"We cannot say that the migrants are from Myanmar unless we can identify them," said government spokesman Ye Htut.

"Most victims of human trafficking claim they are from Myanmar is it is very easy and convenient for them."

Another official, Maj. Zaw Htay, said that Myanmar "will not attend a regional meeting hosted by Thailand if 'Rohingya' is mentioned on the invitation." Even the name is taboo in Myanmar, which calls them "Bengalis" and insists they are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, even though Rohingya have lived in the majority-Buddhist country for generations.

Thailand has convened a meeting of senior officials for May 29, but the Myanmar officials' comments show the difficulty in resolving the crisis.

The deputy spokesman for the U.N. secretary-general, Farhan Haq, told reporters Friday that Ban Ki-moon plans to speak with regional leaders to urge them to put human lives first in the migrant crisis. "We don't want them, in other words, to be in floating coffins," Haq said.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry called his Thai counterpart on Thursday night to discuss the possibility of Thailand providing migrants temporary shelter, State Department spokesman Jeff Rathke said. Rathke did not disclose the Thai response, saying he'd let the Thai authorities speak for themselves. □

Associated Press

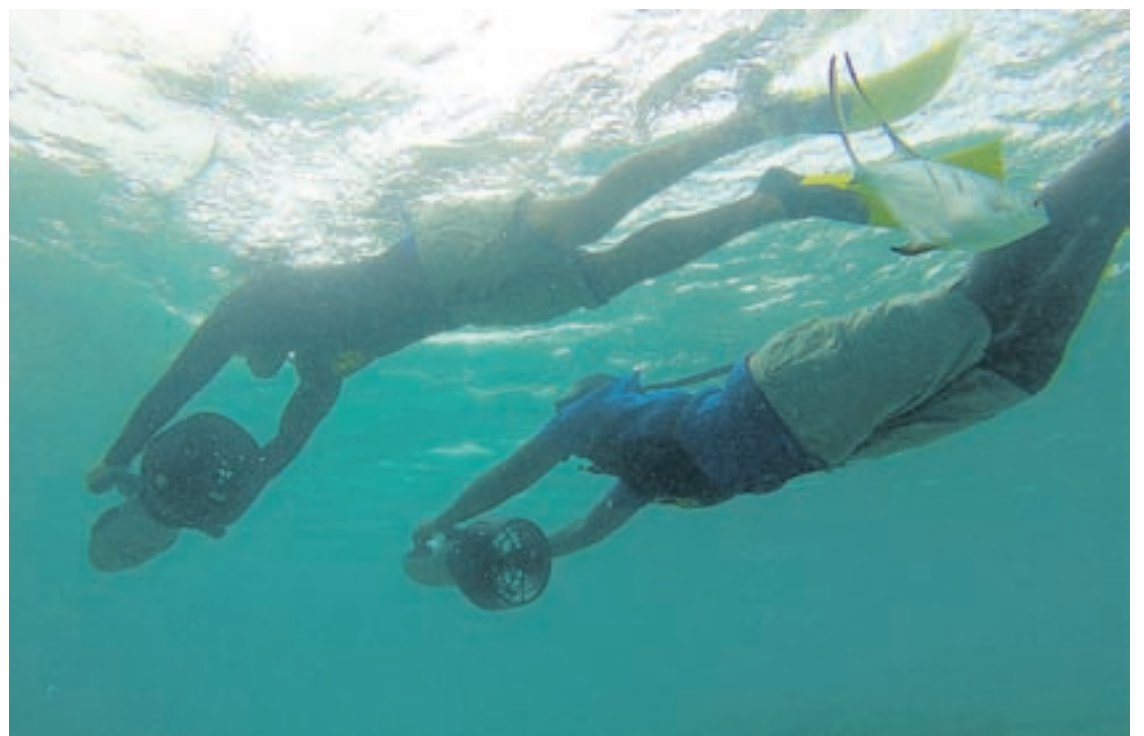


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and lunch buffet, beaches and beach chairs, palapas, unlimited banana boat rides, a waterpark, snorkeling and much more. For more details about Power Snorkel visit De Palm Tours Concierge and Activity Desk in your hotel or www.depalmstours.com. T.: (+297) 522-4500. □



Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino Appoints Augusto Riofrio Mapelli as New Chef of L.G. Smith Steak & Chop House

Oranjestad, Aruba (May XX, 2015) – Renaissance Aruba Resort and Casino has welcomed Chef Augusto Riofrio Mapelli as the new Chef of the resort's luxurious L.G. Smith Steak & Chop House restaurant. With ample experience in the culinary world through positions held at prestigious hotel restaurants that offer upscale dining experiences and a culinary style that aligns with Marriott's CookSmart Philosophy, Chef Riofrio provides a seamless transition into the Renaissance Aruba hospitality team.

In his new role as chef of L.G. Smith Steak & Chop House, Chef Riofrio will spearhead the culinary team at the restaurant and produce quality dishes that showcase the restaurant's specialties: prime steaks, chops and seafood. With an ability to write strong menus and adapt offerings based on guest feedback, Chef Riofrio has already showcased his strong leadership skills both in the kitchen and front of the house. Born and raised in Peru, Chef Riofrio graduated from the Institute of Gastronomy Cuisine D'Gallia in 2006, with an emphasis in pastry and baking, and holds more than 9 years of culinary experience. Chef Riofrio has served as executive chef at Belmond Sanctuary Lodge at Machupicchu Cusco and Tambo del Inka luxury Collection Resort & Spa by Starwood Hotels, as well as chef at Mukul Resort & Spa Nicaragua, Casa Andina Private Collection Cusco and Casa Andina Private Collection Miraflores.



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About Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino

Renaissance Aruba Re-

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Spain's Rafael Nadal reacts after losing a point during a quarter final match against Switzerland's Stan Wawrinka at the Italian Open tennis tournament, in Rome, Friday, May 15, 2015.

Associated Press

Nadal beaten by Wawrinka for 5th loss on clay this year

ANDREW DAMPF
AP Sports Writer

ROME (AP) — The French Open is rapidly approaching and Rafael Nadal is suddenly not so dominant on clay anymore.

The Spaniard was beaten 7-6 (7), 6-2 by eighth-seeded Stan Wawrinka in the Italian Open quarterfinals Friday; his fifth loss on clay this season.

Nadal wasted four set points in the tiebreaker, surrendering a 6-2 lead.

"I didn't have enough leg in some moments today. He played crazy. He hit amazing shots in a lot of moments, and especially important ones," Nadal said. "At 6-2 he played a lot of good points.

"I am not very happy with the way I played," Nadal added. "During the night the ball is bigger, the bounces are not that high. So he has the chance to go for it. And he was on fire."

Continued on Page 20



TRIPLE THREAT

American Pharoah seeks second step on path to immortality

Victor Espinoza rides American Pharoah to victory in the 141st running of the Kentucky Derby horse race at Churchill Downs Saturday, May 2, 2015, in Louisville, Ky.

Associated Press

American Pharoah favored to win Preakness, set up Triple try

RICHARD ROSENBLATT

AP Racing Writer

BALTIMORE (AP) — American Pharoah won the Kentucky Derby, yet didn't look unbeatable, as he had in his previous races. His trainer says he struggled. His jockey went to the whip about 30 times to urge him on in the stretch. His owner says the Derby wasn't even close to his best effort.

And now it's time for the Preakness, where a victory Saturday would set up American Pharoah for a Triple Crown chance at the Belmont Stakes in three weeks. It also would give trainer Bob Baffert an unprecedented fourth Triple try.

Is American Pharoah up to the task?

"That horse didn't really get his A game together in the Kentucky Derby, and he still won," marveled Hall of Famer D. Wayne Lukas, who trains long shot Mr. Z, on Friday morning outside the stakes barn at Pimlico Race Course. "That's a scary thought."

American Pharoah, owned by Ahmed Zayat, is the 4-5 morning-line favorite in an eight-horse field, and will be ridden by Victor Espinoza. Stablemate Dortmund, third in the Derby, is the second choice at 7-2, and Derby

runner-up Firing Line is 4-1. Dortmund also is trained by Baffert, setting up the possibility of a trainer spoiling his own Triple Crown chance. It happened 20 years ago to Lukas, but

by showed the sheer brilliance of American Pharoah," Zayat said. "I hoping you will see the real AP again on Saturday. He is giving me all signs that he is ready again."



Kentucky Derby winner American Pharoah watches activity outside Barn 33 after a morning jog at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Ky., Thursday, May 7, 2015. American Pharoah is continuing his training at Churchill Downs before going to Baltimore for next weekend's Preakness Stakes horse race.

Associated Press

Baffert says of Dortmund: "He deserves another chance."

Zayat, a three-time Derby runner-up before winning two weeks ago, is confident American Pharoah will prove again he's the horse of a lifetime.

"I don't believe the Der-

His colt isn't the only one ready to go.

Dortmund, with Martin Garcia aboard, is looking to avenge his first loss after six wins; Firing Line ran second to Dortmund twice, then fell a length short of American Pharoah in the Derby.

"Hopefully we can turn the tables on American Pharoah, the same as we did Dortmund," said Gary Stevens, Firing Line's Hall of Fame jockey and a three-time Preakness winner.

Divining Rod comes into the 1 3-16th-mile Preakness after winning the Lexington Stakes and skipping the Derby. The colt is owned by Gretchen and Roy Jackson's Lael Stables, and marks the Jacksons' first entry in the Preakness since 2006, when Derby winner Barbaro shattered a leg at the start of the race and was euthanized in January 2007.

"We've put all that behind us and can't wait to see what Divining Rod can do," Roy Jackson said this week. "We hope he'll be competitive, but he deserves to be in the race and given a chance."

The field, from the rail out, is: American Pharoah, Dortmund, Mr. Z, Danzig Moon, Tale of Verve, Bodhisattva, Diving Rod and Firing Line. Post time is 6:18 p.m. EDT (NBC).

The post-position draw did not go Baffert's way, with his horses getting the two inside posts.

"I can't believe I drew the 1-2 of all draws," he said. History says he has reason for concern. Tabasco Cat,

in 1994, was the last Preakness winner out of the No. 1 post. Snow Chief, in 1986, was the last to win from the No. 2 post.

The start could turn into the most critical part of the race. A stumble out of the gate likely ends any chance at victory. The same with jostling for position into the first turn. The top three choices are expected to be on or near the lead, but Espinoza needs to make sure American Pharoah doesn't get pinned on the inside and forced to drop back.

Then again, most of the horses in the field have a similar get-to-the-front style, and if the pace is too fast early on, it could set the stage for a closer like Danzig Moon to pull an upset.

If American Pharoah wins, it would be the 14th time since Affirmed swept the Derby, Preakness and Belmont in 1978 that a Triple Crown would be on the line in the Belmont.

Baffert won the Derby and Preakness with Silver Charm in 1997, Real Quiet in 1998 and War Emblem in 2002. All came up short in the Belmont.

The forecast for Saturday calls for temperatures in the 80s, with a 40 percent chance of scattered thunderstorms. ☐

Contador retains Giro lead despite dislocated shoulder



Italy's Diego Ulissi celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the seventh leg of the Giro d'Italia, Tour of Italy cycling race from Grosseto to Fiuggi, Italy, Friday, May 15, 2015.

Associated Press

FIUGGI, Italy (AP) — A day after dislocating his shoulder in a crash, Alberto Contador retained the overall lead in the Giro d'Italia on Friday as Diego Ulissi sprinted to victory in the longest stage of the race.

Contador, who was injured in a fall on the final sprint of Thursday's sixth stage, competed with lower pressure in his tires to ease any strain on his shoulder. The real test will come this weekend when the race takes to the mountains.

"I'm happy because I got through the day," Contador said. "I suffered a lot from the pain and I'm happy to be here. After three, four hours I didn't know what to do with my arm, but I hope and I'm confident that it will get better as the days pass."

"Tomorrow is one of the stages

that I marked out for myself as one of my targets. Now it will be difficult for me and I expect attacks. At the moment I'm only thinking about resting and putting ice on my shoulder. Then we'll see."

The Spaniard, attempting to become the first rider since Marco Pantani in 1998 to win the Giro and Tour de France in the same year, maintained a two-second lead over Italy's Fabio Aru and a 20-second advantage over third-place Richie Porte.

Ulissi was overcome with emotion at the finish, collapsing on the ground after holding off other more recognized sprinters on the slightly uphill finish to a mainly flat 264-kilometer (164-mile) seventh stage from Grosseto to Fiuggi.

Juan Lobato was second, just ahead of Simon Gerrans after

nearly 7 1/2 hours of cycling on the longest stage of the Giro since 1989.

Ulissi had only recently returned from a suspension after testing positive for the banned substance salbutamol during last year's Giro. "There are great sprinters here and I knew I wasn't the favorite today," Ulissi said. "I started early because I was scared of being caught."

"This win cancels out what happened. They were very difficult months. But I have to say that I am really happy for how I reacted."

There are two second-category climbs in addition to the opening first-category ascent on Saturday's 186K (115.6-mile) leg from Fiuggi to Campitello Matese.

The 98th Giro ends on May 31 in Milan. ☐



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NBA Roundup

James struggles, Cavs still advance past Bulls 94-73

CHICAGO (AP) — Cleveland displayed its depth of talent in the absence of strong performances by LeBron James and Kyrie Irving, beating Chicago 94-73 on Thursday to win the series 4-2 and progress to the NBA Eastern Conference finals.

In the day's other game, Houston came from 19 points down to stun the Los Angeles Clippers on their home court and square that series at 3-3.

Cleveland's James struggled to score 15 points while Irving limped off the court in the first half, but Matthew Dellavedova (19 points) and Tristan Thompson (13 points and 17 rebounds) picked up the slack to guide the Cavaliers to the final four of the playoffs for the first time since 2009.

Cleveland is right where it expected to be after James decided to come home from Miami and re-

turn to his first team. The Cavaliers didn't expect to get there like this though, with Kevin Love suffering a season-ending shoulder injury in the opening round and Irving playing through leg injuries.

"These guys work their tails off every single day when you guys are not around," James said of the lesser-known players who stepped up. "I'm a little bit surprised because of how we've handled the post-season so far. These are first-timers right here (Dellavedova and Thompson) as well as Kyrie and Kev before the injury. They want to be good, they want to be great, and every single day they prepare the right way."

Irving scored six points in 12 minutes before twisting his left knee when he came down on Thompson's foot early in the second quarter. The score was 35-35 and he

did not return.

James had 11 assists and nine rebounds but hardly looked like the superhuman that carried Cleveland in Game 5. He shot 7 of 23 from the field and missed all four 3-point attempts in this game. But the Cavaliers had more than enough to get by, setting up a meeting with Atlanta or Washington.

It is James' fifth straight conference finals, the previous four with Miami.

"I do everything for my team, do everything for my teammates," James said. "I want these guys to be able to feel this moment. That's what I came back here for. I've got four guys that never made the postseason that played a huge role on this team."

Jimmy Butler led Chicago with 20 points and Derrick Rose finished with 14. Pau Gasol scored all of his eight points in the first quarter



Cleveland Cavaliers forward LeBron James (23) drives on Chicago Bulls guard Jimmy Butler (21) during the first half of Game 6 in a second-round NBA basketball playoff series in Chicago on Thursday, May 14, 2015.

Associated Press

after missing the previous two games with a strained left hamstring, and the Bulls simply got overmatched in what could be their final game under coach Tom Thibodeau.

There is heavy speculation that he could be out because of friction with management despite leading Chicago to playoff ap-

pearances in each of his five seasons.

"Until they tell me I'm not, I expect to be here," he said. "That's the way I'm going to approach it."

Iman Shumpert scored 13 points for Cleveland. Dellavedova, James Jones and J.R. Smith (12 points) all hit three 3-pointers and combined to score 40 points. □

Nadal

Continued from Page 17

The last time Nadal was beaten so many times on his favorite surface was 12 years ago — in his rookie season.

Nadal has won the French Open nine of the past 10 years. But he's struggling to get back to his best after a wrist injury and an appendectomy last season.

On Monday, Nadal dropped out of the top five in the ATP rankings for the first time in 10 years — falling to No. 7. That will give him a tough draw in Paris, where play starts next weekend.

"I am ready to accept the challenge," Nadal said. "If I go to Roland Garros (and) I lose (and) I don't play well, life continues. It's not the end of the world. I won so many times there. I don't want to (win) 15 Roland Garros. That's for sure. It's normal that I can lose. Losing is part of life."



Switzerland's Stan Wawrinka returns the ball to Spain's Rafael Nadal during a quarter final match at the Italian Open tennis tournament, in Rome, Friday, May 15, 2015.

Associated Press

But, he added: "I am sure that I can be competitive." Nadal had won all 12 of his meetings with Wawrinka until the Swiss player beat him in last year's Australian Open final for his first Grand Slam title. Now, Wawrinka has won two straight against the Spaniard.

"I was looking for some win to get my confidence back and this is a perfect match for that," Wawrinka

said. "To beat Rafa on clay is something amazing for me."

Wawrinka raised his arms in triumph to celebrate and sent a message to his semifinal opponent — fellow Swiss player Roger Federer. Handed a pen to sign a camera lens, Wawrinka scribbled, "See you tomorrow R.F."

Federer kept up his pursuit of an elusive title with a 6-3,

6-3 win over sixth-seeded Tomas Berdych.

Rome and Monte Carlo are the only Masters series titles that the 17-time Grand Slam champion has never won.

Top-ranked Novak Djokovic, meanwhile, was pushed to three sets for the third consecutive match in a 6-3, 3-6, 6-1 win over fifth-seeded Kei Nishikori.

Djokovic's semifinal opponent will be seventh-seeded David Ferrer, who beat David Goffin of Belgium 6-2, 4-6, 6-3.

In the women's tournament, two-time Rome champion Maria Sharapova defeated former No. 1 Victoria Azarenka 6-3, 6-2. Sharapova will face Daria Gavrilova of Russia, who beat Christina McHale of the United States 6-2, 6-4 in a match of two qualifiers.

Second-seeded Simona Halep routed qualifier Alexandra Dulgheru 6-1, 6-0 in an all-Romanian match. Halep will next face 10th-seeded Carla Suarez Navarro of Spain, who elimi-

nated last week's Madrid Open champion Petra Kvitová 6-3, 6-2.

Djokovic, the defending champion also went three sets against Nicolas Almagro and Thomaz Bellucci in his opening two matches. Still, he extended his winning streak to 20 matches.

"(There were) ups and downs for my side in all three matches," Djokovic said. "This is what it takes to win, just finding the proper way and managing to perform your best when it matters."

Federer fell behind a break midway through the first set but recovered immediately and cruised from there.

"From the baseline I was playing very well," Federer said. "My serve was not quite there from the beginning. I was hitting too many second serves and he was able to take advantage of that and break early. So it was important to pick it up on the serve, which is maybe the easiest thing to do." □

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Gatlin runs 9.74 to win 100 at Diamond League opener in Doha



Justin Gatlin of the U.S., left, runs to win the men's 100m race at the IAAF Diamond League in the Qatari capital Doha, Friday May 15, 2015.

GERALD IMRAY AP Sports Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Justin Gatlin sent a message to Usain Bolt on Friday — both with his legs and his mouth. Gatlin lived up to the pre-season hype by winning the 100 meters in a world-leading 9.74 seconds at the Diamond League opener, a personal-best time and a new meet record for Doha. While Bolt hasn't made his season debut yet, it was an early marker from Gatlin ahead of their anticipated showdown at the world championships in Beijing in August.

"That was for him (Bolt)," Gatlin said. "I just wanted to go out and put down a good time. I know I had to go out and make a statement tonight. That's what my coach told me to do." There was a big gap between Gatlin and his chasers, with U.S. relay teammate Michael Rodgers second in 9.96 and Keston Bledman of Trinidad and Tobago third in 10.01.

Gatlin was the fastest man in the world last season over both 100 and 200 meters while Bolt rested, but went even faster in his first 100 of 2015, despite the sweltering heat at Qatar Sports Club.

Some other big names didn't do as well on the night.

Double Olympic and world long-distance champion Mo Farah made his Doha

debut, but had a rare loss on an outdoor track when he couldn't catch Ethiopian Hagos Gebrhiwet in the 3,000. That brought raucous cheers from the Ethiopian fans dress in their red, yellow and green soccer shirts in one corner of the stadium.

The defeat for Farah, who is starting his track season much earlier than normal, showed he was still human, he said.

"I haven't had a hard competition like that since Moscow (the 2013 worlds)," he said.

Farah struggled to kick into another gear over the final lap and finally found some power through the last turn to come back through the field, but could only get second. Gebrhiwet was the world silver medalist in the 5,000 behind Farah in Moscow.

Despite the loss, Farah went on a lap of honor and was mobbed by fans and volunteers as he tried to come off the track, with them all clamoring for a selfie with him.

Jasmin Stowers showed she's a rising star by winning the 100 hurdles in a personal-best 12.35 seconds, a new Diamond League record. Olympic champion Sally Pearson and 2014 Diamond Race winner Dawn Harper-Nelson were both outside the top three.

The 23-year-old Stowers has improved her PB three

times in 2015 after 12.40 and 12.39 performances previously this year. The latest time matched Pearson's winning mark at the Olympics.

"I was really nervous coming in," said Stowers, who was drawn next to Pearson and pulled away from the Aussie through the last half of the race. Pearson was fourth and Harper-Nelson last after crashing into a hurdle.

Allyson Felix breezed to victory in the 200 meters in a meet-record 21.98 seconds. It was Felix's first 200 of the season, and she broke out into a big grin as she caught a glimpse of her fast winning time as she crossed the line.

"I surprised myself a little bit," the Olympic champion said. "I wasn't sure where I was at."

American Bereshawn Jackson won the 400 hurdles, holding under pressure through the final stretch after clipping the last barrier. Like Farah, some other middle and long-distance runners struggled: 800-meter world champion Mohammed Aman was ninth in a race won by Djibouti's Ayanleh Souleiman. The battle between Abebe Aregawi and Sifan Hassan didn't materialize in the women's 1,500, with Hassan second behind Ethiopia's teenage prospect Dawit Seyaum. Aregawi was seventh.

In the field events, Cuba's

Pedro Pichardo leaped 18.06 meters for the third longest triple jump in history, beating Christian Taylor's 18.04 in a fantastic duel in the pit. World champion Teddy Tamgho ruptured an Achilles tendon and said he would need surgery, almost certainly ruling the Frenchman out of defending his title in Beijing. Greece's Konstantinos Filippidis cleared 5.75 in the pole vault, grabbing his

chance after world-record holder Renaud Lavillenie withdrew in the week with a shoulder injury.

Tianna Bartoletta of the U.S. won the long jump with 6.99 meters, but only after one of a couple of glitches on the night with the technology. It was announced that Lorraine Ugen had set a British record with 7.10 meters, only for organizers to say more than 10 minutes later that was a mistake. □



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SAT 3:10 | 5:45 | 8:20 | 10:55
SUN & HOL 3:10 | 5:45 | 8:20 | 10:55

2D VERSION
MON-THURS 4:20 | 6:55 | 9:30
FRI 4:20 | 6:55 | 9:30 | 12:05
SAT 1:50 | 4:20 | 6:55 | 9:30 | 12:05
SUN & HOL 1:50 | 4:20 | 6:55 | 9:30



ANNA KENDRICK | REBEL WILSON

PITCH PERFECT 2

MON-THURS 4:15 | 6:45 | 9:15
FRI 4:15 | 6:45 | 9:15 | 11:30
SAT 1:50 | 4:15 | 6:45 | 9:15 | 11:30
SUN & HOL 1:50 | 4:15 | 6:45 | 9:15

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LOS PARACAIDISTAS

SPANISH
MON-THURS 4:45 | 7:00 | 9:15
FRI 4:45 | 7:00 | 9:15 | 11:30
SAT 2:30 | 4:45 | 7:00 | 9:15 | 11:30
SUN & HOL 2:30 | 4:45 | 7:00 | 9:15



ROBERT DOWNEY JR. | CHRIS EVANS

AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON

3D VERSION
MON-THURS 5:00 | 8:05
FRI 5:00 | 8:05 | 11:10
SAT 2:00 | 5:00 | 8:05 | 11:10
SUN & HOL 2:00 | 5:00 | 8:05

2D VERSION
MON-FRI 6:00 | 9:00
SAT, SUN & HOL 3:00 | 6:00 | 9:00

HEATHER SOSSAMAN | MATTHEW BOHRER

UNFRIENDED

MON-THURS 5:35 | 7:35 | 9:35
FRI 5:35 | 7:35 | 9:35 | 11:35
SAT 3:35 | 5:35 | 7:35 | 9:35 | 11:35
SUN & HOL 3:35 | 5:35 | 7:35 | 9:35

KEVIN JAMES | RAINI RODRIGUEZ

PAUL BLART: MALL COP 2

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
MON-THURS 4:40 | 6:50 | 9:10
FRI 4:40 | 6:50 | 9:10 | 11:20
SAT 2:30 | 4:40 | 6:50 | 9:10 | 11:20
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Brady, union threaten Goodell with lawsuit in 'Deflategate'

JIMMY GOLEN

AP Sports Writer

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP)

— Tom Brady's lawyers demanded that NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell recuse himself from the Super Bowl MVP's "Deflategate" appeal and threatened to go to court unless the four-game suspension is overturned.

Laying out the grounds for dismissing the penalty and setting the stage for a potential federal court battle, the NFL Players Association said in a letter released Friday that Goodell can't hear the appeal because he will be called as a witness.

"The NFLPA believes that neither Commissioner Goodell nor anyone with close ties to the NFL can serve as arbitrator in Mr. Brady's appeal," the letter said. "If the Commissioner does not appoint such a neutral arbitrator, the NFLPA and Mr. Brady will seek recusal and pursue all available relief to obtain an arbitrator who is not evidently partial."

Brady was suspended for four games and the New England Patriots were fined \$1 million and docked a pair of draft picks after league investigator Ted



In this Thursday, April 30, 2015 file photo, NFL commissioner Roger Goodell speaks during the first round of the 2015 NFL Football Draft in Chicago. Associated Press

Wells found that the Super Bowl champions used illegally inflated footballs in the AFC title game.

The team has denied doing anything wrong and published a 20,000-word rebuttal online. Neither the Patriots nor Donald Yee, the agent for their three-time Super Bowl MVP quarterback, responded to requests for comment on Friday.

In their letter, Brady's lawyers give three arguments for dropping the suspension:

— The evidence collected in the Wells report doesn't prove Brady violated any NFL rules.

— The punishment is more harsh than for previous,

similar violations.

"Indeed," the union wrote, "no player in the history of the NFL has ever received anything approaching this level of discipline for similar behavior — a change in sanctions squarely forbidden by the CBA and the law of the shop."

— Under the league's collective bargaining agreement, only Goodell can punish a player for conduct detrimental to the league. The "Deflategate" penalties were meted out by NFL executive vice president Troy Vincent.

"You have no authority to impose discipline on Mr. Brady under the CBA, and such discipline must therefore be set aside," the let-

ter said, then adding in a footnote a reference to the Adrian Peterson case: "We also note that one arbitrator has previously found that you, in particular, are unfamiliar with proper NFL discipline procedures and have no role in imposing discipline."

Brady appealed the suspension Thursday. Late Thursday night, Goodell announced he would hear the appeal personally. Although the collective bargaining agreement gives him the right to do that, the appeal letter claimed Goodell cannot remain impartial because he will be called as a witness.

Writing to Vincent, the union said it intends "to call both you and Commissioner Goodell as essential witnesses in the proceeding." And it told Vincent "your personal involvement in the game-day events surrounding this matter render you inherently biased in any disciplinary determination."

The team has not said if it will appeal its penalties, which include losing a first-round draft pick next year and a fourth-rounder in 2017. The deadline to appeal is May 21.

Wells concluded that

Brady was "at least generally aware" of plans by two team employees to prepare balls to his liking, below the league-mandated minimum. The NFL requires a range of 12.5-13.5 pounds per square inch; Brady has expressed a preference for footballs with less pressure, which can be easier to grip and catch and some quarterbacks prefer those with less air.

The union's letter comes a day after the Patriots issued a point-by-point rebuttal of the league investigation.

Patriots attorney Daniel Goldberg, who represented the team during the investigation, wrote in the 20,000-word document that those conclusions are "at best, incomplete, incorrect and lack context."

The response presented its own science to explain the loss of pressure in a more innocuous way. And it claimed that a ballboy's reference to himself as "The Deflator" was just a reference to losing weight. It also says increased communication between Brady and the ballboys after the scandal broke were just normal expressions of concern, rather than evidence of the quarterback's guilt. □



This combo of booking photos released by the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, show WNBA players Brittney Griner, left, and Glory Johnson following their arrest on April 22, 2015. Associated Press

DOUG FEINBERG

AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — WNBA stars and newly-married same-sex couple Brittney Griner and Glory Johnson were suspended seven games each Friday for

their domestic violence arrest last month — the league's longest ban in its 19-year history.

WNBA President Laurel Richie said the league "takes all acts of violence extremely seriously" in

Griner, Johnson suspended record 7 games each by WNBA

handing down a suspension that represents more than one-fifth of the 34-game regular season.

"Brittney and Glory's conduct is detrimental to the best interests of the WNBA and violates applicable law," Richie said in a statement. "We also understand that people make mistakes, and that education and training are as important as imposing discipline."

Griner plays for the defending champion Phoenix Mercury and Johnson for the Tulsa Shock. The players got married last week in Phoenix. The teams' preseason training camps start Sunday. The league

season begins June 5.

"I have already learned a tremendous amount from this experience and am committed to improving myself and my marriage going forward," Griner said in a statement. "I realize I let down a lot of people who have been champions for me and I will support my teammates and our organization every day until I am back on the court."

The WNBA said the two All-Stars must undergo individual counseling. If either fails to comply with that condition or those by the court, the league says it can revisit the case.

The players were arrested April 22 on suspicion of

assault after they fought in a home they recently bought. Griner pled guilty to misdemeanor disorderly conduct and entered a diversion program. The assault charge was dismissed. She must attend 26 weeks of domestic violence counseling. All charges will be dismissed if she completes counseling. Johnson's case was transferred to county court and is still pending. The WNBA said Johnson pushed Griner in the shoulder and she responded by pushing her in the back of the neck. The confrontation escalated to include wrestling, punches, and the throwing and swinging of objects. □

Latest self-driving Google car heading to public streets

DEE-ANN DURBIN

AP Auto Writer

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif.

(AP) — The latest version of Google's self-driving car — a pod-like two-seater that needs no gas pedal or steering wheel — will make its debut on public roads this summer, a significant step in the technology giant's mission to have driverless cars available to consumers in the next five years.

This prototype is the first vehicle built from scratch for the purpose of self-driving, Google says. It looks like a Smart car with a shiny black bowler hat to hide its sensors, and it can drive, brake and recognize road hazards without human intervention. The new pod isn't designed for a long trip, or a joyride. It lacks air bags and other federally required safety features, so it can't go more than 25 miles per hour. It's electric, and has to be recharged after 80 miles. And the pod can only drive in areas that have been thoroughly mapped by Google.

At first, it will likely even have a steering wheel and gas pedal — current California regulations require them. Those regulations also require a driver to be able to take back control of the car at any time. But Google is lobbying for more flexible regulations. Google will initially build and test 25 pods, mostly in neighborhoods surrounding its Mountain View headquarters. It will eventually build between 50 and 100, and will broaden testing to sites that are hillier and rainier.

The ultimate goal, says Google co-founder Sergey Brin, is computer-controlled cars that can eliminate human error, which is a factor in an estimated 90 percent of the 1.2 million road deaths that occur worldwide each year. Self-driving cars could also improve traffic congestion and transport the elderly and disabled.

Google shocked the auto industry in 2010 with its announcement that it was working on a driverless car.



In this May 13, 2015 photo, a reporter walks toward Google's new self-driving prototype car during a demonstration at the Google campus in Mountain View, Calif. The car, which needs no gas pedal or steering wheel, will make its debut on public roads this summer.

Associated Press

Brin insists Google doesn't aspire to be a car company, but wants its technology to be adopted by automakers.

"We want to partner to bring self-driving to all the vehicles in the world," Brin told a group of journalists and community members gathered earlier this week to take rides in the prototype.

For now the traditional automakers are pursuing their own self-driving technology, but with less ambitious timeline of 10 to 15 years for a truly driverless car.

Chris Urmson, who directs Google's self-driving car project, says the slow-moving, friendly looking prototype — his young son thinks it looks like a koala because of the nose-like black laser on the front — is a good bridge between the company's current test fleet of 20 specially outfitted Lexus SUVs and the more advanced, higher-speed driverless cars of its future, which might not even look like anything on the road today.

"This vehicle is really all about us learning. This vehicle could go on a freeway, but when we think about introducing the technology, we want to do that very thoughtfully and very safely," Urmson says.

Convincing drivers that driverless technology is safe is one of the hurdles the company must overcome. Earlier this week,

in response to questions from The Associated Press, Google acknowledged 11 minor accidents in the six years it has been testing autonomous cars. Urmson says the company is proud of that record, and notes that Google's vehicles have completed more than 1.7 million miles of testing. He says all but one of the accidents were caused by drivers in other cars; in the only incident caused by a Google car, a staffer was driving in manual mode.

Consumers question whether they can trust self-driving cars to work all the time, who will be liable if there's an accident and how self-driving cars will interact with regular cars, says the consulting firm J.D. Power and Associates. In a 2013 survey of U.S. drivers, J.D. Power found only one in five was interested in a fully autonomous car.

Urmson says Google needs to do a better job of educating people about self-driving technology and updating them on Google's

progress. It's building a Web site to teach people about the technology, and the site will feature a monthly report that will include details of any accidents involving Google cars. The site will also have a section where people can send feedback when they interact with the cars. The prototype cars — assembled in suburban Detroit by Roush Industries — have the same array of radars, lasers and cameras as Google's fleet of Lexus SUVs, which allows them to share data. If one car's camera spots orange cones and construction signs, for example, it will alert all the others to slow down in that area or re-route around a lane closure.

Dmitri Dolgov, the head of software for the self-driving car project, says Google's software has gotten much better over the last year at classifying objects, like trees and mailboxes, and predicting behavior of pedestrians and other cars. For example, Google's cars will slow down if they sense that a car in the next lane is speeding up to cut in front of them. □

Reddit enacts anti-harassment policy after user complaints

NEW YORK (AP) — Reddit, the online discussion forum known for its free-wheeling ethos, is enacting an anti-harassment policy while still trying to keep its roots as a place for free expression. Reddit said in a blog post Thursday that it is "unhappy with harassing behavior" on the site and its survey data shows that users are too. It has been reviewing its community guidelines for the past six months.

"We've seen many conversations devolve into attacks against individuals," the San Francisco company wrote in a blog post, adding that it is also seeing more and different types of harassment than in the

past. For example, some users are harassing people across platforms and posting links on Reddit to private information on other sites, it said.

Reddit's interim CEO is Ellen Pao, who this year lost a high-profile gender-discrimination lawsuit against a prominent venture capital firm. That case highlighted issues of gender imbalance and working conditions for women in Silicon Valley.

Reddit said in its blog post that it defines harassment as "systematic and/or continued actions to torment or demean someone," making them fear for their safety or conclude that the social-networking and

news site is not a safe place to express ideas.

Users being harassed can report the message or post via email. Reddit said it will handle each situation separately, and responses could include banning users.

Earlier this year, Reddit said it would remove photos, videos and links with explicit content if the person in the image hasn't given permission for it to be posted.

That change came about six months after hackers obtained nude photos of Jennifer Lawrence and other celebrities and posted them to social media sites, including Reddit and Twitter. □

Why I skipped the bank and took out a loan from my 'peers'

KEN SWEET

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — When I realized I was paying off six different credit cards and not getting anywhere, I decided to consolidate my debt, like millions of other Americans.

I visited my local bank, asked for a \$15,000 loan but was offered an interest rate higher than my cards were charging.

So I looked into online lenders and discovered a growing part of the sharing economy known as peer-to-peer lending, a system in which a group of investors pool money to loan to people like me.

The first company I went to, Upstart, was willing to lend me money but again, the interest rate was too high. Then I went to Prosper, the second-largest lender in the industry. Prosper found



AP reporter Ken Sweet poses for a portrait, Thursday, May 14, 2015 in New York.

Associated Press

investors in my loan in two days and I had my money in five.

I never visited a branch or

met a loan officer. And the interest rate of less than 9 percent beat the 13 percent offered by my brick-and-mortar bank.

After borrowing the money, I wanted to know more. Who were these "peers" and why did they think I was such a good credit risk?

The answer took me deep into an industry that has already attracted some of the biggest names on Wall Street, like Blackrock and Goldman Sachs, but remains below the radar of most federal regulators. Peer-to-peer lending is still untested by recession, and analysts say it can carry big risks for investors. Consumers, largely unfamiliar with the industry, could face interest rates that exceed even the most expensive credit cards.

The name "peer-to-peer lending" is somewhat misleading. While individuals do lend money, most of the funding for loans comes from hedge funds, insurance and investment companies, and wealth advisers. It took me three months to find a "peer" who invested in my loan.

Prosper, like the rest of the industry, is seeing exponential growth. The San Francisco-based service created \$600 million worth of loans over the first three months of this year, more than triple what it did a year ear-

lier, and it's hiring as many as 10 loan officers and other employees a week, says CEO Aaron Vermut.

Prosper competes with Lending Club, which went public in December, and has reported a 100-plus percent jump in the amount of money it loans year over year. Both companies expect their loan growth to double or triple in the foreseeable future.

Prosper and Lending Club are just two of dozens of companies trying to compete. Some, like Upstart, specialize in loans for young borrowers with limited credit history. Others, like OnDeck, which went public last year, focus on loans to small businesses.

Peer-to-peers have been able to charge less than traditional banks largely because their costs are low. Prosper, Lending Club and others have no retail branches, and the risk is passed onto investors. As more investors put money into these loans, interest rates have fallen as well. Prosper loans in 2013 had an average rate of 16.8 percent. In 2015, the rate is 13.3 percent.

Even with this growth, peer-to-peer lending is tiny compared with big banks. JPMorgan, for example, has \$187 billion in consumer loans on its balance sheet. The lending peer I tracked down is Don Davis. I owe

him \$1,500. Davis' company, Prime Meridian Capital Management, owns 10 percent of my loan.

"I take you at your word you'll pay us back," Davis joked in an interview.

Davis got into peer-to-peer lending in 2012 and owns more than 14,000 loans, in whole or in pieces. His \$60 million-plus Prime Meridian Income Fund had a return of 8.5 percent in 2014.

Like many investors, Davis was attracted to peer-to-peer lending because other types of debt, such as bonds, had become unattractive. With interest rates and yields stubbornly low, it's difficult to make much money in that market.

How does my 9 percent rate compare? Junk bonds, a risky type of debt, offer a yield of slightly more than 6 percent. Bonds from high-rated companies yield around 2 percent. And one of the safest types of debt, three- and five-year U.S. Treasury notes, have a yield of 0.93 percent and 1.50 percent, respectively. "I see personal loans as being simple and transparent. That's why I like them," Davis said. "We looked at a lot of different investments that gave us the yield we were looking for, but many of them behind the scenes were overly complex and higher risk."

Matt O'Malley runs a small investment company in Wisconsin called Looking Glass Investments, which invests solely in loans created by peer-to-peer lending sites.

"We like to invest in people," O'Malley said. "We're able to provide a service that a bank is no longer able to competitively provide."

Looking Glass is small, with less than \$10 million in assets, but it owns more than 6,200 loans and is growing quickly. Looking Glass had a 10.2 percent return last year on those investments. I asked O'Malley if he owned part of my loan, but he said he only looks at data, not the person. He uses an in-house formula to determine the risk of defaults. □



In this Nov. 21, 2011, file photo, shoppers stand outside of FAO Schwarz in New York.

Associated Press

Toys R Us says it will close FAO Schwarz store in July

NEW YORK (AP) — Toys R Us is closing its iconic FAO Schwarz store, citing the high and rising costs of running the retail space on New York City's pricey Fifth Avenue. The company said Friday it will close the 45,000-square-foot store July 15 and it is looking for another location in midtown Manhattan. FAO Schwarz says it is the oldest toy store in the U.S., as it has had a location in New York City since 1870. It moved to its current Fifth Avenue location in 1986.

The location features a candy store, numerous specialty toy departments spread across three levels, and personal shoppers. It has been featured in several movies, including "Big," where Tom Hanks danced on its large floor piano.

Toys R Us, of Wayne, New Jersey, has been privately held since 2005. It bought the FAO Schwarz brand in 2009. □

U.S. stock indexes end mostly higher; S&P hits new high

ALEX VEIGA

AP Business Writer

U.S. stock indexes spent Friday mostly drifting between tiny gains and losses, but the small moves were

enough to nudge the Standard & Poor's 500 index to its second record high in two days. The Dow Jones industrial average also notched a



In this March 17, 2015 file photo, a currency trader counts US dollar notes for customers at a currency exchange store in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The U.S. Treasury releases international money flows data for March on Friday, May 15, 2015.

Associated Press

Foreign ownership of U.S debt rises; China reclaims top spot

CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Foreign holdings of U.S. debt rose in March as China ramped up its purchases and displaced Japan as the leading owner of U.S. Treasury securities.

The Treasury Department says overseas ownership of U.S. debt rose 2.1 percent in March to \$6.18 trillion. That is below January's record of \$6.22 trillion. China added \$37.3 billion of Treasury debt, bringing its stockpile to \$1.26 trillion. That's ahead of Japan, which added just \$2.5 billion, lifting its total to \$1.23 trillion.

In February, Japan became the leading owner of U.S. debt for the first time since August 2008. China overtook Japan that year as the Great Recession, higher government spending and a steep drop in tax revenue pushed up U.S. government borrowing. The U.S. deficit topped \$1

trillion from 2009 through 2012.

Foreign governments, primarily through their central banks, account for two-thirds of the foreign holdings. In March, the total held by foreign governments rose 1 percent from the previous month to \$4.13 trillion.

A group of oil exporting nations, which includes Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Algeria, Venezuela and Nigeria, added \$500 million to bring their holdings to \$297.3 billion, the third largest. Caribbean banking centers, a group that includes the Bahamas and the Cayman Islands, added \$10.9 billion, lifting their holdings to \$293 billion, the fourth largest.

Demand for U.S. Treasuries, widely considered one of the world's safest investments, is likely to remain strong. While U.S. interest rates are still low, they may climb later this year if the Federal Reserve begins to raise interest rates. □



Specialist Michael Gallucci works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange Friday, May 15, 2015. U.S. stocks are little changed in early trading a day after the Standard & Poor's 500 index closed at an all-time high.

Associated Press

gain for the second day in a row. The Nasdaq bucked the trend, closing slightly lower. Utilities stocks were among the biggest gainers as investors weighed a mix of U.S. economic data and corporate earnings news. The price of U.S. oil fell slightly, ending a second week in a row nearly flat just under \$60 a barrel. Despite the latest milestone, it was a mostly listless day on Wall Street, as traders appeared content to hold off on major moves following Thursday's big

rally.

The Dow rose 20.32 points, or 0.1 percent, to 18,272.56. That's within 16 points of its record set on March 2. The S&P 500 index gained 1.63 points, or 0.1 percent, to 2,122.73. The Nasdaq slipped 2.50 points, or 0.1 percent, to 5,048.29. The three indexes are up for the month and year.

Trading got off to a sluggish start early Friday and remained mostly muted, with the major indexes hovering near their prior-day totals. Separate reports on Friday

offered a mixed assessment of U.S. manufacturing. The Federal Reserve said factory activity in New York increased slightly in May, suggesting that manufacturers are beginning to adapt to the challenges caused by a stronger dollar, lower oil prices and restrained consumer spending. Meanwhile, U.S. industrial output fell for the fifth straight month in April. The trend suggests that weakness in manufacturing and mining are weighing heavily on the economy. □

Ride-hailing service Lyft says Icahn makes \$100M investment

NEW YORK (AP) — Carl Icahn is joining the parade of investors in startups, hitching a \$100 million ride with the ride-hailing service Lyft.

The billionaire activist investor is known for tangling with corporate boards, sometimes launching proxy fights and pushing companies to make big changes or sell themselves. He's less well known for investing in startups, but that's become one of the hottest areas in the market. Venture capitalists poured more than \$48 billion into startups last year, the most since the dot-com bubble burst.

Icahn owns stakes in Apple, Yahoo, Netflix, Hertz, Gannett and eBay, among many other publicly traded companies.

Users download Lyft's app and use it to book a ride from a nearby driver, and they can also use the app to pay for their rides. In March, the company raised \$530 million and valued itself at \$2.5 billion. The privately held company said Friday it brought in \$150 million in the new round of fundraising including Icahn's investment.

Lyft was launched in 2012 and touts its friendly drivers and an alternative image: In its early days its cars were marked with huge, pink, fuzzy mustaches strapped to the front bumper. This year the company adopted a more modest version of the mustache that sits on the dashboard of the car instead of its exterior.

The company says it operates in about 65 cities

including New York, San Francisco and Washington DC. In the fall it rolled out a new service, Lyft Line, that matches up travelers with similar destinations so they can share a ride and save money.

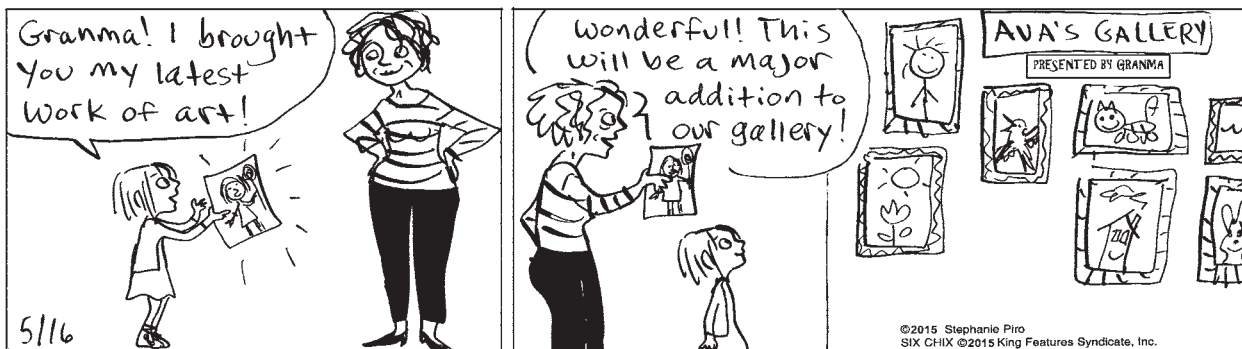
Icahn said in a statement that he believes ride-sharing will become a key part of transportation infrastructure in the U.S. He also praised Lyft's revenue growth and its management. Jonathan Christodoro, a managing director of Icahn Enterprises, will join the San Francisco company's board of directors. Lyft didn't comment on any other terms in the investment.

Lyft rival Uber Technologies says it is active in 58 countries, and it's valued at more than \$40 billion. □

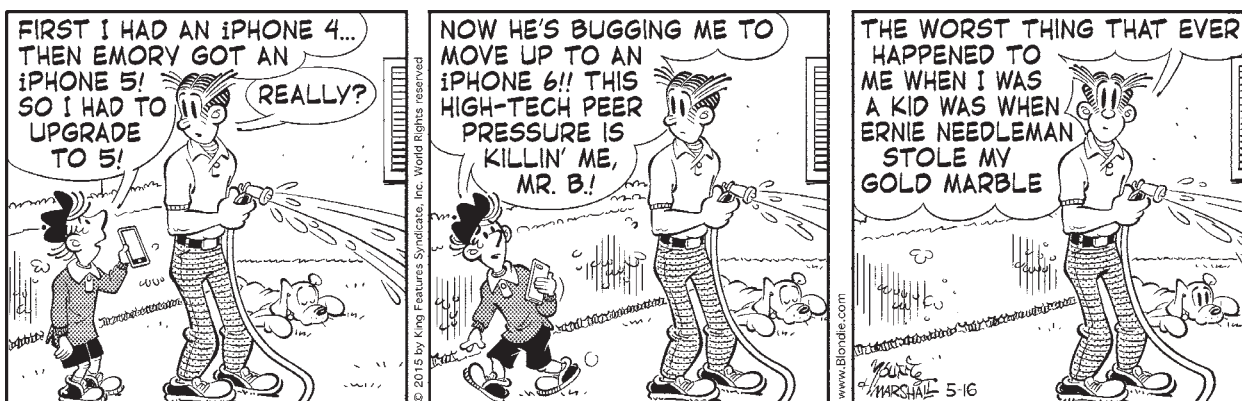
Mutts



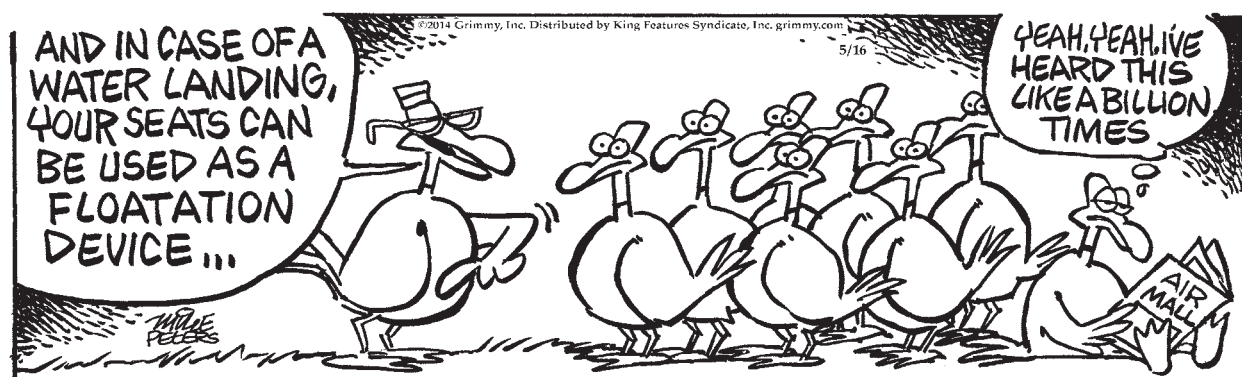
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Blondie



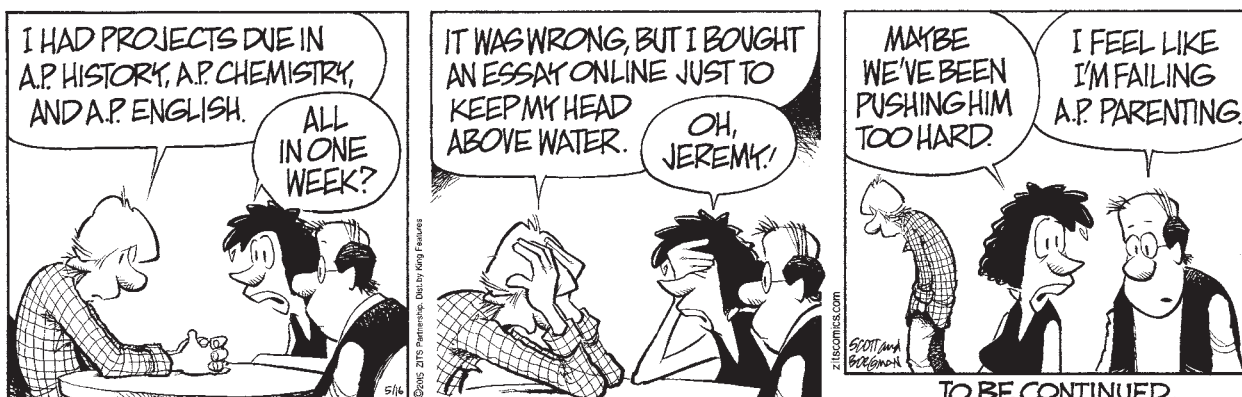
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

				4	2		5	
2	7	5			9			6
	9					4		5
	5						2	
3		2					8	
6			7			1	3	9
	4		8	1				

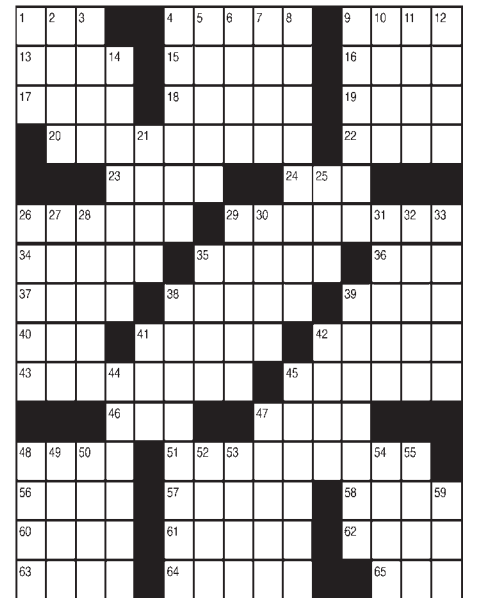
Difficulty Level ★★★★★ 5/16

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

4	2	5	1	3	6	8	9	7
9	8	6	7	4	2	3	1	5
3	1	7	5	8	9	4	2	6
6	9	2	4	7	1	5	8	3
7	4	3	8	2	5	9	6	1
8	5	1	6	9	3	7	4	2
5	6	8	3	1	4	2	7	9
1	7	9	2	5	8	6	3	4
2	3	4	9	6	7	1	5	8

ACROSS

- Mayo container
- Zeal
- "Wonderful Life"
- Kiln
- Sifting device
- Close by
- Jeff Bridges' brother
- Nat and Natalie
- Table seasoning
- Unwanted flab
- Annoys
- Convent dwellers
- Sra. or Mme.
- Calm
- Ruin
- deliberately
- Mel or Woody
- Small ravine
- Money sent to Uncle Sam
- Hired vehicles
- Base-stealer's move, often
- Easy stride
- Huge bird from Australia
- Stadium
- Not as coarse
- Wrecking
- Least risky
- Singer Tillis
- Suffered defeat
- Health nut's lunch, perhaps
- Try to sell in the classifieds
- Crew members
- Unsuspecting
- as a pin
- Oxford or loafer
- Leg joints
- Deep long cut
- Totals
- Valuable thing
- Sault __, Marie



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews 5/16/15

Friday's Puzzle Solved

BORIS	SCAB	MATT
EVENT	OAHU	OMRI
TENSE	AVAS	LEAR
ANTELOPE	TRANCE	
CLAY	BLESSED	
MORTAR	SEEDS	
AVE	REAMS	SEAMS
LEND	DIETS	SUIT
TROUT	LASER	SKI
LOSER	LATTER	
GARLAND	ALDA	
AGENDA	POSITION	
BRIE	TIER	ATONE
BEGS	COAT	NOTES
YENS	HULA	TOAST

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DOWN

- Duty
- Hail Marys, for short
- Gather crops
- Go skyward
- Street uprisings
- Sandwich shop
- Hand __; deliver
- Look like
- Be adamant
- Drop of joy or sorrow
- Polio vaccine developer
- __ and crafts
- Very subtle differences in meaning
- Destroy
- Trigger's rider
- Walked the floor
- Peruvian pack animal
- Scrapbook
- Bringing a civil action against
- "M*A*S*H" star
- Make amends
- Stares
- openmouthed
- __ oneself; put forth effort
- Valley
- Asian nation
- Raising up
- Grow old
- Quick
- Entertains
- Most miffed
- Embankment
- Fling
- Hawaiian island
- "... sea to shining sea."
- Marino and Rather
- Competes
- Adriatic and Mediterranean
- Vane direction
- Definite article



This May 10, 2013, file photo shows a genetically engineered potato poking through the soil of a planting pot inside J.R. Simplot's lab in southwestern Idaho.

Associated Press

U.S. develops new government label for GMO-free products

MARY CLARE JALONICK

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. Agriculture Department has developed a new government certification and labeling for foods that are free of genetically modified ingredients.

USDA's move comes as some consumer groups push for mandatory labeling of the genetically modified organisms, or GMOs.

The certification is the first of its kind and would be voluntary — and companies would have to pay for it. If approved, the foods would be able to carry a "USDA Process Verified" label along with a claim that they are free of GMOs.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack outlined the department's plan in a May 1 letter to employees, saying the certification was being done at the request of a "leading global company," which he did not identify. A copy of the letter was obtained by The Associated Press.

Right now, there are no government labels that only certify a food as GMO-free. Many companies use a private label developed by a nonprofit called the Non-GMO Project. The USDA organic label also certifies that foods are free of genetically modified ingredients, but many non-GMO foods aren't organic.

Vilsack said the USDA certification is being created through the department's Agriculture Marketing Service, which works with interested companies to certify the accuracy of the claims they are making on food packages — think "humanely raised" or "no antibiotics ever." Companies pay the Agricultural Marketing Service to verify a claim, and if approved, they can market the foods with the USDA process verified label.

"Recently, a leading global company asked AMS to help verify that the corn and soybeans it uses in its products are not genetically engineered so that the company could label the products as such," Vilsack wrote in the letter. "AMS worked with the company to develop testing and verification processes to verify the non-GE claim."

A USDA spokesman confirmed that Vilsack sent the letter but declined to comment on the certification program. Vilsack said in the letter that the certification "will be announced soon, and other companies are already lining up to take advantage of this service."

Genetically modified foods come from seeds that are originally engineered in laboratories to have certain traits, like resistance to herbicides. □

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Study: With goats, chickens, program helps poorest get by

MALCOLM RITTER
AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The poorest of the poor can be helped with a program that includes providing goats, sheep, chickens or other livestock and training in how to make money from them, a large six-nation study concludes.

That approach didn't wipe out poverty for participants, but they became "significantly less poor," said economist Dean Karlan of Yale University and the nonprofit Innovations for Poverty Action.

"There's no panacea," Karlan said, but the approach is "better than anything else I'm aware of."

Karlan and colleagues conducted an independent evaluation of the anti-poverty strategy, which is widely used in Bangladesh, to see if it would work in a variety of settings. Their review included more than 10,000 households in Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, India, Pakistan and Peru. Results were published Thursday by the journal Science.

The assessment focused on the poorest within villages. About half the households had incomes that translate to earning less than \$1.25 per person a day in the United States.

Key components of the programs include providing assets like livestock and training in how to manage them, a regular stipend to provide basic support, and encouragement to save money.

To evaluate the program, the study randomly assigned eligible households to participate or not, and then compared the outcomes for the two groups over three years.

Most of the program's activity was in the first few months. At the two-year mark, when the program ended, the participating group was doing better across a wide range of measures. The gains were largely maintained a year after that.

The study checked on things like household spending, value of assets, how often participants went to bed hungry, amount of time



In this Monday, April 20, 2015 file photo, a man stands at the entrance of a house in a shanty area in New Delhi, India.

spent working, income and physical health.

The program's benefits exceeded its cost in all countries except Honduras, where a large fraction of the chickens died from disease.

Christopher Blattman of Columbia University, who studies poverty but didn't

participate in the new research, praised Karlan's evaluation and said the anti-poverty strategy is "a great program."

Stephen Smith of George Washington University, an adviser to the American affiliate of BRAC, an organization that uses the strategy in Bangladesh, said the

results show that "graduation" from ultra-poverty is possible through self-employment or, eventually, jobs.

He said the finding of increased spending on food is particularly encouraging, because that is key to improving well-being and escaping poverty traps. □

Associated Press

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James Taylor says Obama is great; riding Hillary train

MESFIN FEKADU

AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Barack Obama supporter James Taylor doesn't just think the U.S. president is great — he believes Obama is the greatest of all-time.

"I've been watching politics since (Dwight) Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson, when dinosaurs roamed the Earth, and Obama is my favorite, favorite president," Taylor said in an interview Wednesday. "I am just thankful for every day that he's in office. I am so proud that he represents my country and I think he represents me — I think he represents the America that I know."

Taylor, 67, is a recipient of the National Medal of Arts. The pop icon performed "America the Beautiful" at Obama's second inauguration in 2013.

"I had a really tough time during the Cheney-Bush

years, I did, and I had a hard time accepting that that administration represented me because I don't think they did," Taylor said. The Rock and Roll Hall of Famer also called Obama's family "precious" and said he appreciates the U.S. leader because he's "sane" and "balanced."

"He promised to give us a health care system, it's a work in progress, but he has put us on a road to that," Taylor said. "I'm so grateful for what he's done for gay rights and for the emancipation of gay people. Particularly from my point of view, I think that was so overdue and so important, and so important for America to be ahead of the curve on this."

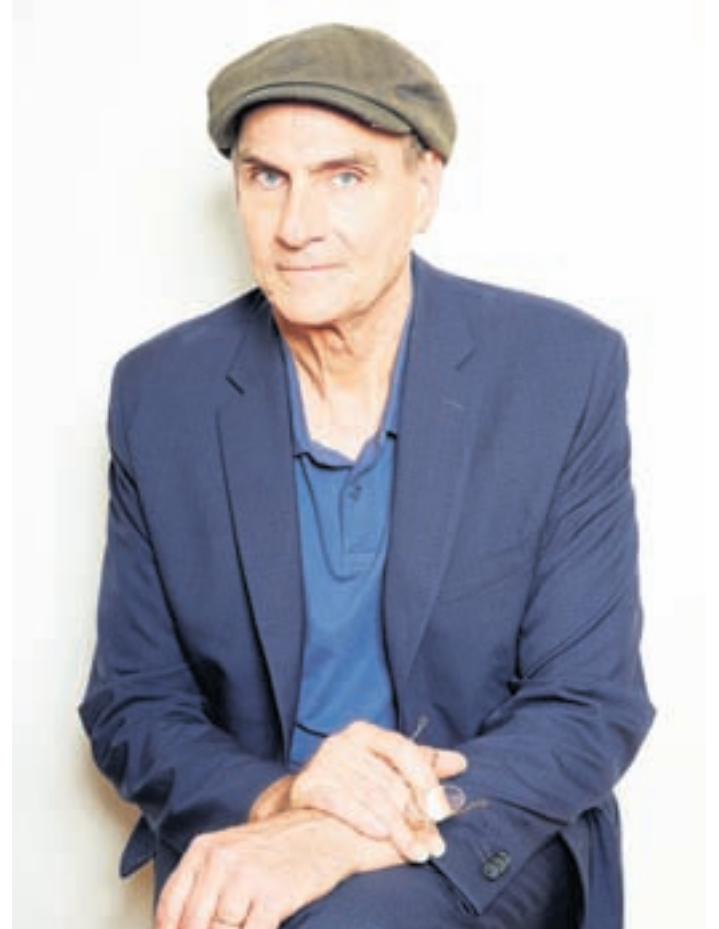
Taylor criticized Congress in Obama's defense.

"I've never seen a Congress that has been so obstructive and so contrary and so committed to do-

ing anything that will foul up this administration. I just think it's an absolute scandal that he has had so little cooperation," he said. "So anyway, you hit a nerve and I'll go on forever. But I'll just say it a third time: Every day that Barack Obama and Michelle Obama are in the White House is a day that I am thankful for."

Obama isn't the only politician Taylor is supporting: The singer said he's on the Hillary Rodham Clinton train, too.

"And aside from the fact that she's a woman running, she's the right person. ... The whole point — black or white, male or female, gay or straight, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, atheist — it doesn't matter what these other connections are," he said. "Our country needs to come together and the question is, 'Is this public servant someone who will bring us together?'" □



Grammy Award winning singer-songwriter James Taylor poses for a portrait in New York on Wednesday, May 13, 2015.

Associated Press

Aruhiba Cigars, Aruba's only hand rolled cigars!

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ORANJESTAD- Benjamin Petrocchi, a true native Aruban started the newest export product of Aruba, locally produced hand rolled cigars called "Aruhiba". These cigars are produced and cultivated in Aruba. Petrocchi always had a interest in the cigar business and has also sold Premium Cuban Cigars, and now he is growing his own tobacco crops. After many attempts and trips to Santo Domingo and Cuba, he started his own production and cultivation of Aruhiba Cigars in Aruba. The whole process took him 10 years to perfect. Petrocchi dedication to the cigars is important for the moulding and process of making a perfect cigar which takes a long time. Their handmade cigar box is specially designed with their "Aruhiba" logo. Petrocchi considers

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Owner Benjamin Petrocchi

'King of the Blues' B.B. King dead at 89 at home in Vegas

KEN RITTER

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — B.B. King, whose scorching guitar licks and heartfelt vocals made him the idol of generations of musicians and fans while earning him the nickname King of the Blues, died late Thursday at home in Las Vegas. He was 89.

King's attorney Arthur Williams Jr. said Friday that King told him he wanted his funeral to be held in a church in Indianola, Mississippi, near the site where he worked picking cotton as a boy. Arrangements were not complete.

King's eldest surviving daughter, Shirley King of Oak Park, Illinois, said she was upset that she didn't have a chance to see her father before he died.

King continued to perform well into his 80s even though the 15-time Grammy winner had diabetes. He had been in declining health during the past year and collapsed during a concert in Chicago last October, later blaming dehydration and exhaustion. He had been in hospice care at his Las Vegas home.

For most of his career spanning nearly 70 years, Riley B. King was not only the undisputed king of the blues but a mentor to scores of guitarists, including Eric Clapton, Otis Rush, Buddy Guy, Jimi Hendrix, John Mayall and Keith Richards. King recorded more than 50 albums and toured the world, often performing 250 or more concerts a year.

King played a Gibson guitar that he affectionately called Lucille with a style that included beautifully crafted single-string runs punctuated by loud chords, subtle vibratos and bent notes.

The result could bring chills to an audience, no more so than when King used it to full effect on his signature song, "The Thrill is Gone." He would make his guitar shout and cry in anguish as he told the tale of forsaken love, then end with a guttural shouting of



In this Feb. 16, 2007 file photo, B.B. King performs at the Wicomico Youth and Civic Center, in Salisbury, Md. King died Thursday, May 14, 2015, peacefully in his sleep at his Las Vegas home at age 89, his lawyer said.

Associated Press

the final lines: "Now that it's all over, all I can do is wish you well."

His style was unusual. King didn't like to sing and play at the same time, so he developed a call-and-response between him and Lucille.

"Sometimes I just think that there are more things to be said, to make the audience understand what I'm trying to do more," King told The Associated Press in 2006. "When I'm singing, I don't want you to just hear the melody. I want you to relive the story, because most of the songs have pretty good storytelling."

A preacher uncle taught him to play, and he honed his technique in abject poverty in the Mississippi Delta, the birthplace of the blues.

"I've always tried to defend the idea that the blues doesn't have to be sung by a person who comes from Mississippi, as I did," he said in the 1988 book "Off the Record: An Oral History of Popular Music."

"People all over the world have problems," he said. "And as long as people have problems, the blues can never die."

Fellow travelers who took King up on that theory in-



In this April 21, 1980 file photo, B.B. King, left, and an accompanist perform during the opening of the 1980 New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival.

Associated Press

cluded Clapton, the British-born blues-rocker who collaborated with him on "Riding With the King," a best-seller that won a Grammy in 2000 for best traditional blues album.

Singer Smokey Robinson praised the music legend. "The world has physically lost not only one of the greatest musical people ever but one of the greatest people ever. Enjoy your eternity," Robinson said.

Still, the delta's influence was undeniable. King began picking cotton on tenant farms around Indianola before he was a teenager, being paid as little as 35 cents for every 100 pounds. He was still working off sharecropping debts after

he got out of the Army during World War II.

"He goes back far enough to remember the sound of field hollers and the cornerstone blues figures, like Charley Patton and Robert Johnson," ZZ Top guitarist Billy Gibbons once told Rolling Stone magazine.

King got his start in radio with a gospel quartet in Mississippi and soon moved to Memphis, Tennessee, where a job as a disc jockey at WDIA gave him access to a wide range of recordings. He studied the great blues and jazz guitarists, including Django Reinhardt and T-Bone Walker, and played live music a few minutes each day as the "Beale Street Blues

Boy," later shortened to B.B.

Through his broadcasts and live performances, he quickly built a following in the black community and recorded his first R&B hit, "Three O'Clock Blues," in 1951.

He began to break through to white audiences, particularly young rock fans, in the 1960s with albums like "Live at the Regal," which would later be declared a historic sound recording worthy of preservation by the Library of Congress' National Recording Registry. He further expanded his audience with a 1968 appearance at the Newport Folk Festival and when he opened shows for the Rolling Stones in 1969.

King was inducted into the Blues Foundation Hall of Fame in 1984, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1987 and received the Songwriters Hall of Fame Lifetime Achievement Award in 1990. He received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President George W. Bush, gave a guitar to Pope John Paul II and had President Barack Obama sing along to his "Sweet Home Chicago."

Other Grammys included best male rhythm 'n' blues performance in 1971 for "The Thrill is Gone," best ethnic or traditional recording in 1982 for "There Must Be a Better World Somewhere" and best traditional blues recording or album several times. His final Grammy came in 2009 for best blues album for "One Kind Favor."

Through it all, King modestly insisted he was simply maintaining a tradition.

"I'm just one who carried the baton because it was started long before me," he told the AP in 2008.

Born Riley B. King on Sept. 16, 1925, on a tenant farm near Itta Bena, Mississippi, King was raised by his grandmother after his parents separated and his mother died. He worked as a sharecropper for five years in Kilmichael, an even smaller town, until his father found him and took him back to Indianola. □

Of Museums and Racial Relics



Charles M. Blow
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Recently, Rush Limbaugh lambasted the first lady, Michelle Obama, for bringing up the idea of diversity among museum visitors at the opening of the new Whitney Museum in New York.

According to Limbaugh, the first lady said: "Museums and concert halls just don't welcome nonwhite visitors - especially children - the way they welcome white people."

What the first lady actually said was: "You see, there are so many kids in this country who look at places like museums and concert halls and other cultural centers and they think to themselves, well, that's not a place for me, for someone who looks like me, for someone who comes from my neighborhood. In fact, I guarantee you that right now, there are kids living less than a mile from here who would never in a million years dream that they would be welcome in this museum."

Then, she went on to laud the Whitney for its efforts at inclusion and diversity: "And with this inaugural exhibition, the Whitney is really sending the same message to young people and to people of every background across this country. You're telling them that their story is part of the American story, and that they deserve to be seen. And you're sending that message not just with the art you display, but with the educational programming you run here. You're reaching out to kids from all backgrounds, exposing them to the arts, showing them that they have something to contribute."

It was a rather mild, if not flattering, way to acknowledge a disparity while also encouraging efforts to counter it.

And, the first lady was right. A 2010 report by the Center for the Future of Museums (an initiative of the American Association of Museums) found that:

"African-Americans and Latinos have notably lower rates of museum attendance than white Americans. Why is that so? In part, it is the legacy of historic discrimination. A summary study of SPPA (Survey of Public Participation in the Arts) data from the 1980s on white and black attendance at arts events concluded that the measurable difference in participation could be tied to 'subtle forms of exclusion.'"

The report cited data that shows "historic patterns of segregation

and exclusion as one reason that fewer African-American families instill museum-going habits in their young children. More recent studies have identified a distinct cultural psychology among African-Americans, rooted in historical and social experience, which has produced heightened sensitivity to stereotypes and real or perceived racism."

But for Limbaugh, this wasn't about museum attendance at all. It was simply another opportunity to excrete the tired banalities about the Obamas as failed racial messiahs at best, and active racial agitators at worst.

As Limbaugh put it, referencing President Barack Obama: "Everything has to be about race with these people! You know, we were supposed to be post-racial with the election of Obama. We're supposed to have put all that behind us. His election was supposed to mean something. It was supposed to signify that we had overcome and gotten past the original sin of slavery. And instead, as I knew would be the case, it's gotten worse by design. And this is one of the reasons why."

And this isn't only Limbaugh's view. This is the view of many Americans, whether they tune in to Limbaugh or not.

Obama's sin, using this line of logic, is that he failed to undo the system of oppression that he had no hand in constructing. It is that 400 years of damage was not undone in two terms. It is that he didn't encourage silence about inequity so that its benefactors could enjoy the cumulative fruit of centuries of racial graft without current-day guilt.

They wanted some mythical receipt of satisfaction of the debt. Let bygones be bygones. All is forgotten and forgiven. Clean slate. Fresh start.

If only it were that simple. But it's not. This whole line of reasoning is racial claptrap.

Professorial provocateur Shelby Steele wrote in The Los Angeles Times the day after Obama was first elected in 2008: "Obama's post-racial idealism told whites the one thing they most wanted to hear: America had essentially contained the evil of racism to the point at which it was no longer a serious barrier to black advancement."

But, Steele countered: "I don't think whites really want change from Obama as much as they want documentation of change that has already occurred. They want him in the White House first of all as evidence, certification and recognition."

And yet, all of America must face the reality that for as much progress as has been made, much remains to be made. America must face the fact that the electorate is an of-the-moment entity, but racial oppression is an of-the-ages monstrosity. It is a resilient relic. And it was never within Obama's capacity to dismantle it. This structure must be demolished by its architects. □



How Hillary Is Winning



Frank Bruni
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As fleetly as Hillary Clinton vacuums up the money, she piles up the paradoxes.

She showed fatal weaknesses the last time she chased the presidency and her inevitability evaporated like a California puddle, but she's somehow inevitable all over again. Invincible, even. Journalists have to remind themselves daily not to type or say "presumptive Democratic nominee" before her name.

She's fashioning herself as someone uniquely attuned to "everyday Americans" while her husband fashions \$500,000 speeches as amulets against the bill collector. Someone's got to pay for the burrito bowls.

And her Republican rivals convince themselves that "I'm not Hillary" is their strongest argument and best bet, although the reverse holds true. At least for now, not being any one of them is her ace in the hole.

The 2016 race in its adolescence is between the dependably messy, perpetually maddening spectacle of the Clintons and a party with a brand-decimating profusion of mad hatters like the two who announced their bids and grabbed the spotlight last week, Mike Huckabee and Ben Carson.

Advantage: Hillary Clinton. That's a clear takeaway from several surveys of voters released last week. They showed that despite her email shenanigans, despite the ethical muddle known as the Clinton Foundation, despite the growing confusion about whether the Hillary Clinton of 2016 will be of an ideological

piece with the Hillary Clintons of yesteryear, voters will gladly take her, considering the alternatives. According to an NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll, she was six points ahead of Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio in head-to-head contests with either. She was 10 points ahead of Scott Walker. Inexplicably and rather alarmingly, she was only three ahead of Rand Paul. The mysteries of the American electorate are boundless.

Meanwhile a New York Times/CBS News poll found that over the past month and a half, during which she weathered a veritable hurricane of negative news coverage, her favorability rating improved, and the percentage of voters who see her as a strong leader rose to 65 from 57. Nearly 80 percent of the Democrats surveyed deemed her honest and trustworthy.

There are many explanations. For starters, the hurricane I mentioned was experienced as a drizzle, if that, by many Americans, who aren't exactly riveted by political news. Inasmuch as they notice journalists pouncing on the Clintons, they're apt to shrug. The substance of the accusations is eclipsed by the familiarity of the tussle. It's like lions on an impala: bloody, yes, but the natural order.

And the Clintons are being accused of what? Greed? There's plenty of that to go around. Just ask Huckabee, a self-styled man of God and slave to Mammon.

As recounted by Trip Gabriel in The Times, Ron Fournier in the National Journal and Max Brantley in Salon, he's a case study in financial high jinks, a master class in shamelessness. He reportedly used the Arkansas governor's office "as a personal ATM," in Fournier's description, channeling public money toward private expenditures (a doghouse, Taco Bell) and accepting tens of thousands of dollars in highly questionable gifts, some from people who later received prominent political appointments.

More recently he did an infomercial hawking dietary supplements as a diabetes cure, even though reputable physicians and medical associations call it poppycock. Only three of the following four adjectives correctly describe that decision: tacky, mercenary,

irresponsible and presidential.

Clinton benefits from not being Huckabee, who described Obamacare's contraception provision as a big-government sop to women who can't "control their libido," blamed an absence of God in schools for the deadly shooting rampage in Newtown, Connecticut, in 2012 and then proceeded to write a book with a title that put firearms on a comforting par with breakfast food. Run, don't walk, to pick up your copy of "God, Guns, Grits, and Gravy."

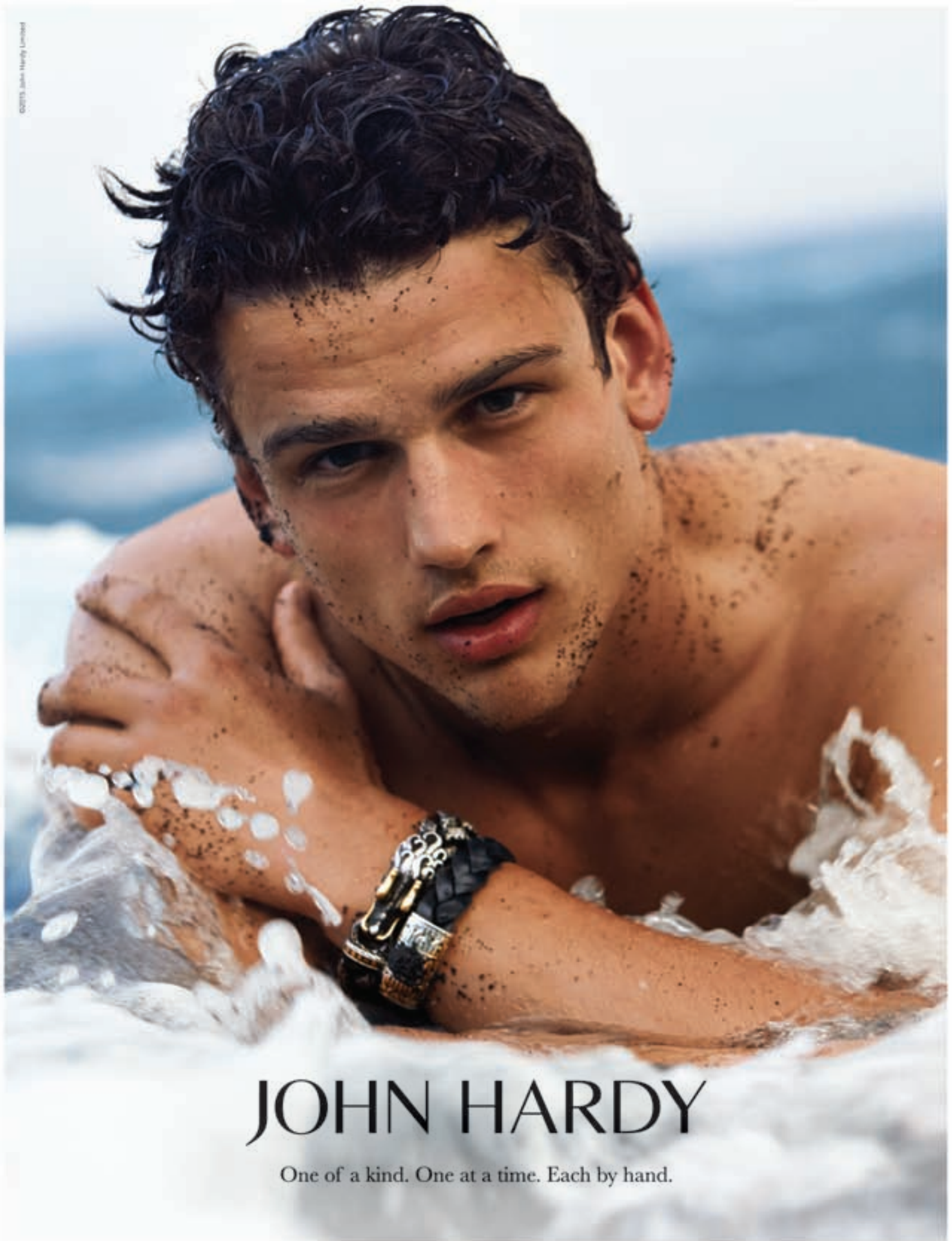
Clinton also benefits mightily from not being Carson, who has lumped together homosexuality and bestiality and has likened Obamacare to slavery, President Barack Obama to a psychopath and the United States under Obama to Nazi Germany. It is said that Carson is a talented brain surgeon. I'm taking my cerebellum elsewhere if it ever comes to that.

And Clinton benefits as well from not being Carly Fiorina, who also declared a candidacy for the presidency last week. When Americans look askance at professional politicians, it doesn't mean that they long for the polar opposite and are poised to award the presidency to someone who, in Fiorina's case, has never held elected office, routinely failed to vote in the past, bungled her role as a surrogate for John McCain in 2008, had a miserable showing in her 2010 race for the U.S. Senate against Barbara Boxer, and claims a business expertise that's long been in vigorous dispute. Her campaign will be powered by hubris, not logic.

Republicans crow about their deep bench. And they do have some formidable candidates, including Marco Rubio, who is an anti-Hillary in ways that could indeed work for him, and Jeb Bush. But Rubio and Bush share the bench with an unruly crowd that pulls them and the party too far to the right.

Republicans also take heart from their majority in the Senate and their greater number of governors. But voters behave somewhat differently in presidential elections than in other ones, which is one reason Wisconsin has remained blue even during Walker's red reign. □

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